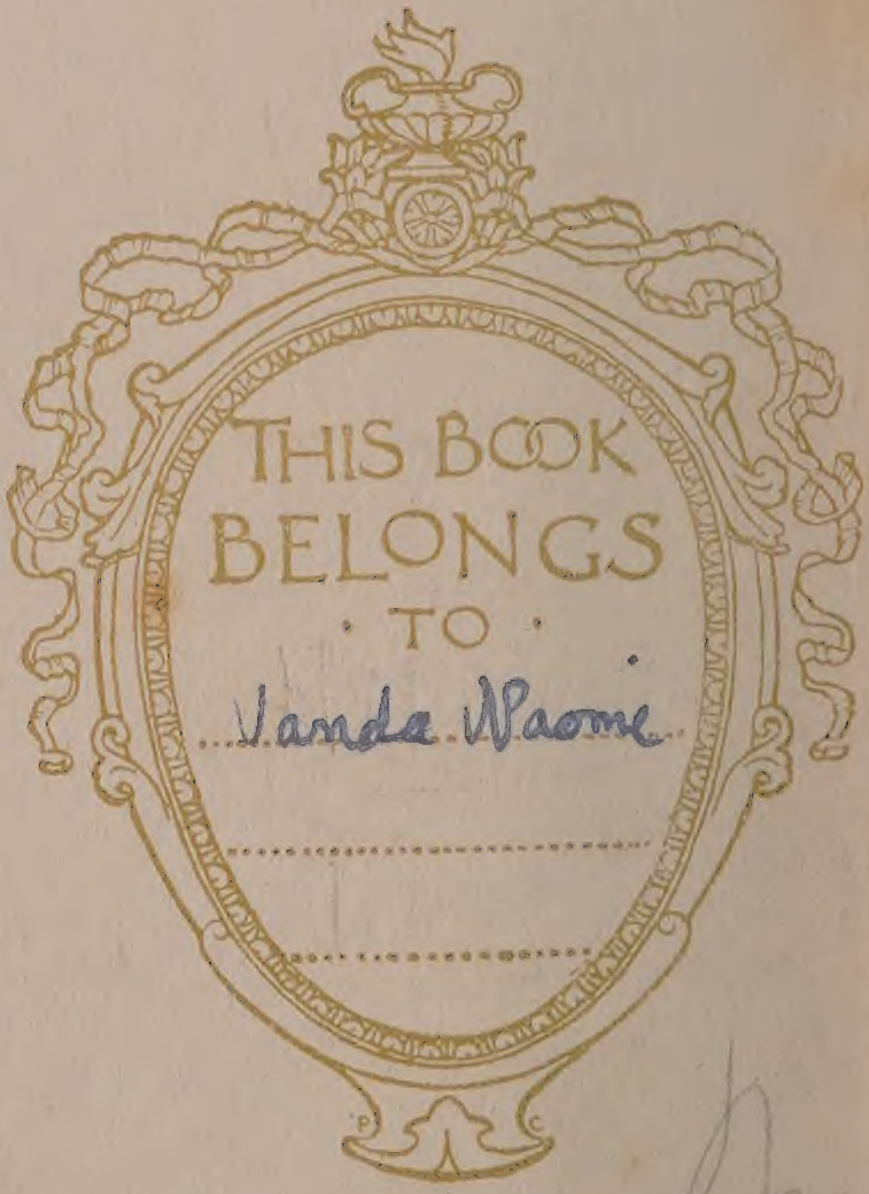
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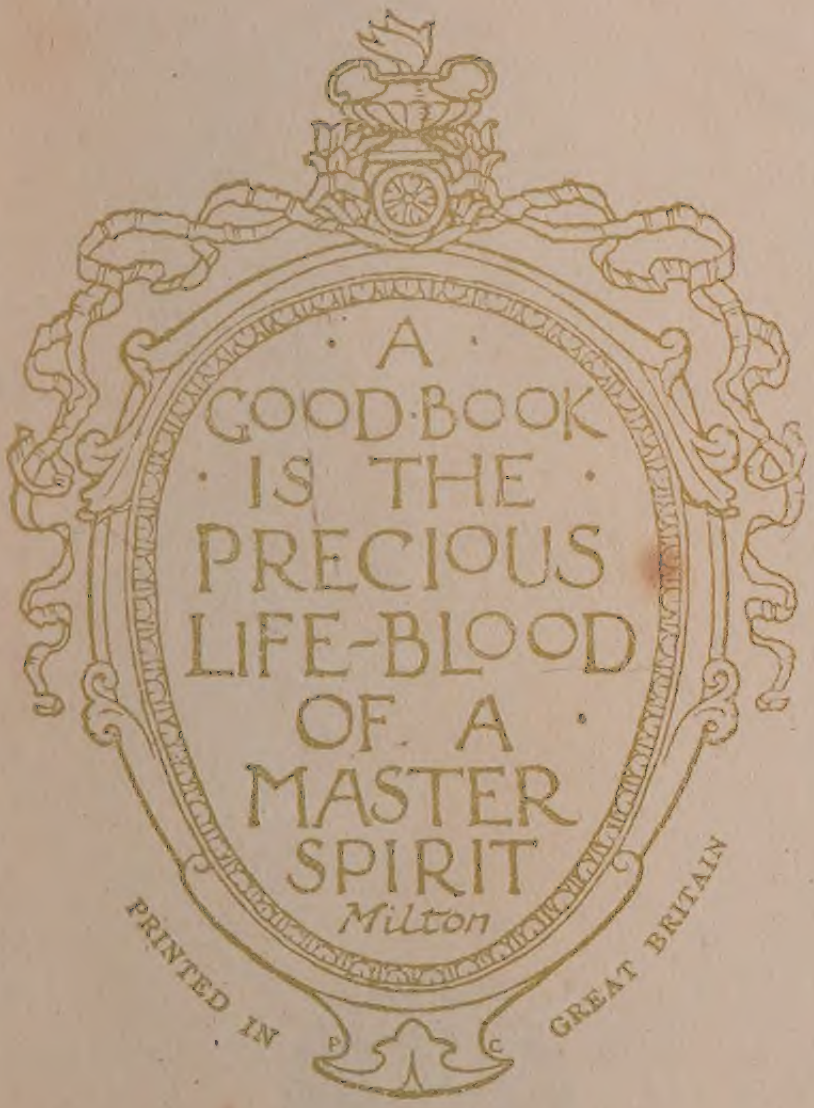
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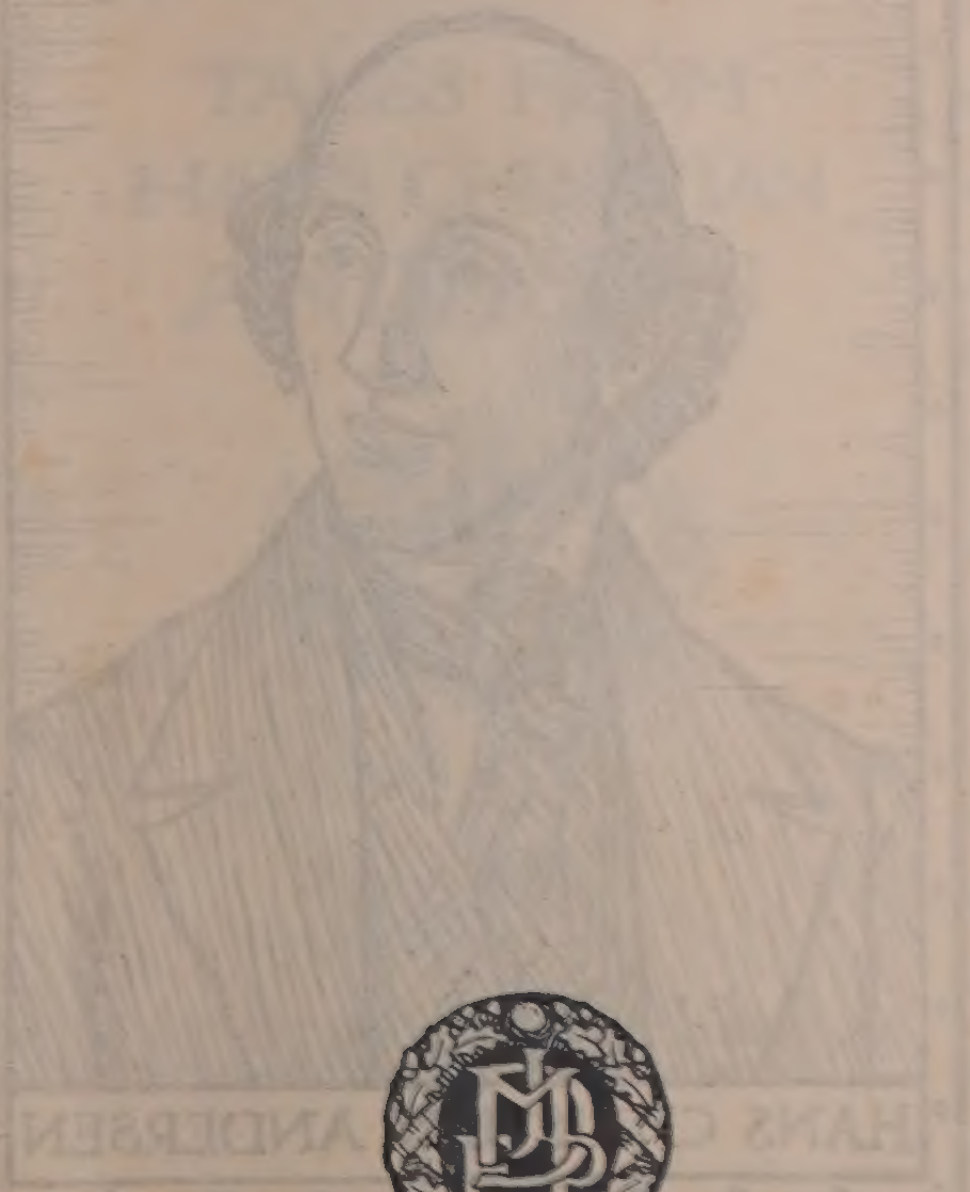

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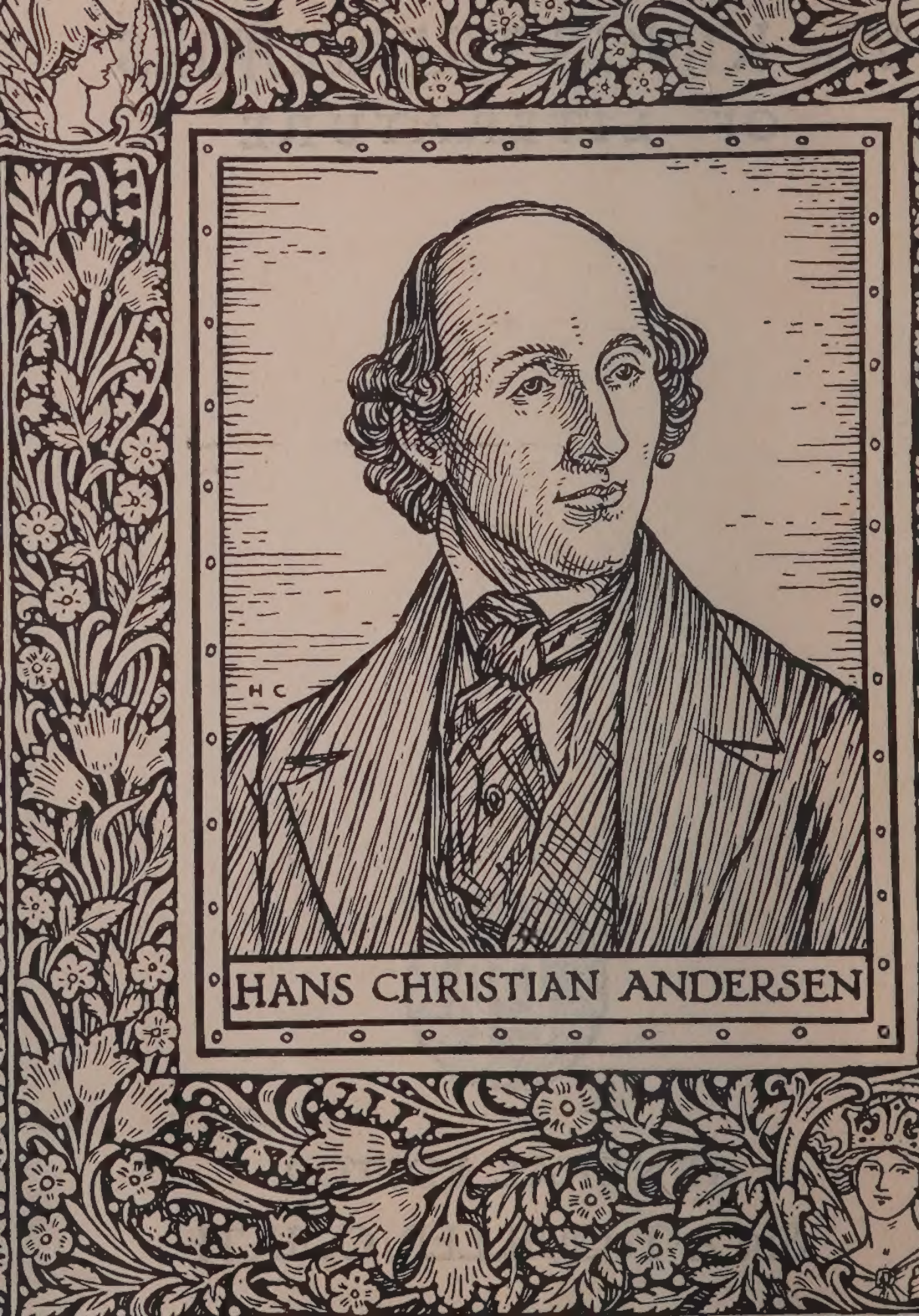
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HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

TALES FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

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TALES FROM ANDERSEN

THE MERMAID

FAR out at sea the water is as blue as the bluest cornflower, and as clear as the clearest crystal; but it is very deep, too deep for any cable to fathom, and if many steeples were piled on the top of one another they would not reach from the bed of the sea to the surface of the water. It is down there that the Mermen live.

Now don't imagine that there are only bare white sands at the bottom; oh no! the most wonderful trees and plants grow there, with such flexible stalks and leaves, that at the slightest motion of the water they move just as if they were alive. All the fish, big and little, glide among the branches just as, up here, birds glide through the air. The palace of the Merman King lies in the very deepest part; its walls are of coral and the long pointed windows of the clearest amber, but the roof is made of mussel shells which open and shut with the lapping of the water. This has a lovely effect, for there are gleaming pearls in every shell, any one of which would be the pride of a queen's crown.

The Merman King had been for many years a

widower, but his old mother kept house for him; she was a clever woman, but so proud of her noble birth that she wore twelve oysters on her tail, while the other grandees were only allowed six. Otherwise she was worthy of all praise, especially because she was so fond of the little mermaid princesses, her grandchildren. They were six beautiful children, but the youngest was the prettiest of all; her skin was as soft and delicate as a roseleaf, her eyes as blue as the deepest sea, but like all the others she had no feet, and instead of legs she had a fish's tail.

All the livelong day they used to play in the palace in the great halls, where living flowers grew out of the walls. When the great amber windows were thrown open the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our rooms when we open the windows, but the fish swam right up to the little princesses, ate out of their hands, and allowed themselves to be patted.

Outside the palace was a large garden, with fiery red and deep blue trees, the fruit of which shone like gold, while the flowers glowed like fire on their ceaselessly waving stalks. The ground was of the finest sand, but it was of a blue phosphorescent tint. Everything was bathed in a wondrous blue light down there; you might more readily have supposed yourself to be high up in the air, with only the sky above and below you, than that you were at the bottom of the ocean. In a dead calm you could

just catch a glimpse of the sun like a purple flower with a stream of light radiating from its calyx.

Each little princess had her own little plot of garden, where she could dig and plant just as she liked. One made her flower-bed in the shape of a whale, another thought it nice to have hers like a little mermaid; but the youngest made hers quite round like the sun, and she would only have flowers of a rosy hue like its beams. She was a curious child, quiet and thoughtful, and while the other sisters decked out their gardens with all kinds of extraordinary objects which they got from wrecks, she would have nothing besides the rosy flowers like the sun up above, except a statue of a beautiful boy. It was hewn out of the purest white marble and had gone to the bottom from some wreck. By the statue she planted a rosy red weeping willow which grew splendidly, and the fresh delicate branches hung round and over it, till they almost touched the blue sand where the shadows showed violet, and were ever moving like the branches. It looked as if the leaves and the roots were playfully interchanging kisses.

Nothing gave her greater pleasure than to hear about the world of human beings up above; she made her old grandmother tell her all that she knew about ships and towns, people and animals. But above all it seemed strangely beautiful to her that up on the earth the flowers were scented, for they were not so at the bottom of the sea; also that the

woods were green, and that the fish which were to be seen among the branches could sing so loudly and sweetly that it was a delight to listen to them. You see the grandmother called little birds fish, or the mermaids would not have understood her, as they had never seen a bird.

"When you are fifteen," said the grandmother, "you will be allowed to rise up from the sea and sit on the rocks in the moonlight, and look at the big ships sailing by, and you will also see woods and towns."

One of the sisters would be fifteen in the following year, but the others—well, they were each one year younger than the other, so that the youngest had five whole years to wait before she would be allowed to come up from the bottom, to see what things were like on earth. But each one promised the others to give a full account of all that she had seen, and found most wonderful on the first day. Their grandmother could never tell them enough, for there were so many things about which they wanted information.

None of them was so full of longings as the youngest, the very one who had the longest time to wait, and who was so quiet and dreamy. Many a night she stood by the open windows and looked up through the dark blue water which the fish were lashing with their tails and fins. She could see the moon and the stars; it is true their light was pale, but they looked much bigger through the water

than they do to our eyes. When she saw a dark shadow glide between her and them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming above her, or else a ship laden with human beings. I am certain they never dreamt that a lovely little mermaid was standing down below, stretching up her white hands towards the keel.

The eldest princess had now reached her fifteenth birthday, and was to venture above the water. When she came back she had hundreds of things to tell them, but the most delightful of all, she said, was to lie in the moonlight, on a sandbank in a calm sea, and to gaze at the large town close to the shore, where the lights twinkled like hundreds of stars; to listen to music and the noise and bustle of carriages and people; to see the many church towers and spires, and to hear the bells ringing; and just because she could not go on shore she longed for that most of all.

Oh, how eagerly the youngest sister listened! and when, later in the evening, she stood at the open window and looked up through the dark blue water, she thought of the big town with all its noise and bustle, and fancied that she could even hear the church bells ringing.

The year after, the second sister was allowed to mount up through the water and swim about wherever she liked. The sun was just going down when she reached the surface, the most beautiful sight, she thought, that she had ever seen. The whole sky had

looked like gold, she said, and as for the clouds! well, their beauty was beyond description; they floated in red and violet splendour over her head, and, far faster than they went, a flock of wild swans flew like a long white veil over the water towards the setting sun; she swam towards it, but it sank, and all the rosy light on clouds and water faded away.

The year after that the third sister went up, and being much the most venturesome of them all, swam up a broad river which ran into the sea. She saw beautiful, green, vine-clad hills; palaces and country seats peeping through splendid woods. She heard the birds singing, and the sun was so hot that she was often obliged to dive, to cool her burning face. In a tiny bay she found a troop of little children running about naked and paddling in the water; she wanted to play with them, but they were frightened and ran away. Then a little black animal came up; it was a dog, but she had never seen one before; it barked so furiously at her that she was frightened and made for the open sea. She could never forget the beautiful woods, the green hills and the lovely children who could swim in the water although they had no fishes' tails.

The fourth sister was not so brave; she stayed in the remotest part of the ocean, and, according to her account, that was the most beautiful spot. You could see for miles and miles around you, and the sky above was like a great glass dome. She had seen ships, but only far away, so that they looked like sea-

gulls. There were grotesque dolphins turning somersaults, and gigantic whales squirting water through their nostrils like hundreds of fountains on every side.

Now the fifth sister's turn came. Her birthday fell in the winter, so that she saw sights that the others had not seen on their first trips. The sea looked quite green, and large icebergs were floating about, each one of which looked like a pearl, she said, but was much bigger than the church towers built by men. They took the most wonderful shapes, and sparkled like diamonds. She had seated herself on one of the largest, and all the passing ships sheered off in alarm when they saw her sitting there with her long hair streaming loose in the wind.

In the evening the sky became overcast with dark clouds; it thundered and lightened, and the huge icebergs, glittering in the bright lightning, were lifted high into the air by the black waves. All the ships shortened sail, and there was fear and trembling on every side, but she sat quietly on her floating iceberg watching the blue lightning flash in zigzags down on to the shining sea.

The first time any of the sisters rose above the water she was delighted by the novelties and beauties she saw; but once grown up, and at liberty to go where she liked, she became indifferent and longed for her home; in the course of a month or so they all said that after all their own home in the deep was best, it was so cosy there.

Many an evening the five sisters, interlacing their arms, would rise above the water together. They had lovely voices, much clearer than any mortal, and when a storm was rising, and they expected ships to be wrecked, they would sing in the most seductive strains of the wonders of the deep, bidding the sea-farers have no fear of them. But the sailors could not understand the words, they thought it was the voice of the storm; nor could it be theirs to see this Elysium of the deep, for when the ship sank they were drowned, and only reached the Merman's palace in death. When the elder sisters rose up in this manner, arm-in-arm, in the evening, the youngest remained behind quite alone, looking after them as if she must weep, but mermaids have no tears and so they suffer all the more.

"Oh! if I were only fifteen!" she said, "I know how fond I shall be of the world above, and of the mortals who dwell there."

At last her fifteenth birthday came.

"Now we shall have you off our hands," said her grandmother, the old queen dowager. "Come now, let me adorn you like your other sisters!" and she put a wreath of white lilies round her hair, but every petal of the flowers was half a pearl; then the old queen had eight oysters fixed on to the princess's tail to show her high rank.

"But it hurts so!" said the little mermaid.

"You must endure the pain for the sake of the finery!" said her grandmother.

But oh, how gladly would she have shaken off all this splendour, and laid aside the heavy wreath! Her red flowers in her garden suited her much better, but she did not dare to make any alteration. "Good-bye," she said, and mounted as lightly and airily as a bubble through the water.

The sun had just set when her head rose above the water, but the clouds were still lighted up with a rosy and golden splendour, and the evening star sparkled in the soft pink sky; the air was mild and fresh, and the sea as calm as a millpond. A big three-masted ship lay close by with only a single sail set, for there was not a breath of wind, and the sailors were sitting about the rigging, on the cross-trees, and at the mast-heads. There was music and singing on board, and as the evening closed in, hundreds of gaily coloured lanterns were lighted—they looked like the flags of all nations waving in the air. The little mermaid swam right up to the cabin windows, and every time she was lifted by the swell she could see through the transparent panes crowds of gaily dressed people. The handsomest of them all was the young prince with large dark eyes; he could not be much more than sixteen, and all these festivities were in honour of his birthday. The sailors danced on deck, and when the prince appeared among them hundreds of rockets were let off, making it as light as day, and frightening the little mermaid so much that she had to dive under the water. She soon ventured up again, and it was just as if all the stars of heaven were falling in showers

round about her. She had never seen such magic fires. Great suns whirled round, gorgeous fire-fish hung in the blue air, and all was reflected in the calm and glassy sea. It was so light on board the ship that every little rope could be seen, and the people still better. Oh, how handsome the prince was! how he laughed and smiled as he greeted his guests, while the music rang out in the quiet night!

It got quite late, but the little mermaid could not take her eyes off the ship and the beautiful prince. The coloured lanterns were put out, no more rockets were sent up, and the cannon had ceased its thunder, but deep down in the sea there was a dull murmuring and moaning sound. Meanwhile she was rocked up and down on the waves, so that she could look into the cabin; but the ship got more and more way on, sail after sail was filled by the wind, the waves grew stronger, great clouds gathered, and it lightened in the distance. Oh, there was going to be a fearful storm! and soon the sailors had to shorten sail. The great ship rocked and rolled as she dashed over the angry sea; the black waves rose like mountains, high enough to overwhelm her, but she dived like a swan through them and rose again and again on their towering crests. The little mermaid thought it a most amusing race, but not so the sailors. The ship creaked and groaned, the mighty timbers bulged and bent under the heavy blows, the water broke over the decks, snapping the main-mast like a reed;

she heeled over on her side, and the water rushed into the hold.

Now the little mermaid saw that they were in danger, and she had for her own sake to beware of the floating beams and wreckage. One moment it was so pitch-dark that she could not see at all, but when the lightning flashed it became so light that she could see all on board. Every man was looking out for his own safety as best he could, but she more particularly followed the young prince with her eyes, and when the ship went down she saw him sink in the deep sea. At first she was quite delighted, for now he was coming to be with her, but then she remembered that human beings could not live under water, and that only if he were dead could he go to her father's palace. No! he must not die; so she swam towards him all among the drifting beams and planks, quite forgetting that they might crush her. She dived deep down under the water, and came up again through the waves, and at last reached the young prince just as he was becoming unable to swim any further in the stormy sea. His limbs were numbed, his beautiful eyes were closing, and he must have died if the little mermaid had not come to the rescue. She held his head above the water and let the waves drive them whithersoever they would.

By daybreak all the storm was over, of the ship not a trace was to be seen; the sun rose from the water in radiant brilliance, and his rosy beams seemed to cast a glow of life into the prince's cheeks,

but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his fair and lofty brow, and stroked back the dripping hair; it seemed to her that he was like the marble statue in her little garden; she kissed him again and longed that he might live.

At last she saw dry land before her, high blue mountains on whose summits the white snow glistened as if a flock of swans had settled there; down by the shore were beautiful green woods, and in the foreground a church or temple, she did not quite know which, but it was a building of some sort. Lemon and orange trees grew in the garden and lofty palms stood by the gate. At this point the sea formed a little bay where the water was quite calm, but very deep, right up to the cliffs; at their foot was a strip of fine white sand to which she swam with the beautiful prince, and laid him down on it, taking great care that his head should rest high up in the warm sunshine.

The bells now began to ring in the great white building and a number of young maidens came into the garden. Then the little mermaid swam further off behind some high rocks and covered her hair and breast with foam, so that no one should see her little face, and then she watched to see who would discover the poor prince.

It was not long before one of the maidens came up to him; at first she seemed quite frightened, but only for a moment, and then she fetched several others, and the mermaid saw that the prince was coming to

life, and that he smiled at all those around him, but he never smiled at her; you see he did not know that she had saved him: she felt so sad that when he was led away into the great building she dived sorrowfully into the water and made her way home to her father's palace.

Always silent and thoughtful, she became more so now than ever. Her sisters often asked her what she had seen on her first visit to the surface, but she never would tell them anything.

Many an evening and many a morning she would rise to the place where she had left the prince. She saw the fruit in the garden ripen, and then gathered; she saw the snow melt on the mountain-tops, but she never saw the prince, so she always went home still sadder than before. At home her only consolation was to sit in her little garden with her arms twined round the handsome marble statue which reminded her of the prince. It was all in gloomy shade now, as she had ceased to tend her flowers and the garden had become a neglected wilderness of long stalks and leaves entangled with the branches of the tree.

At last she could not bear it any longer, so she told one of her sisters, and from her it soon spread to the others, but to no one else except to one or two other mermaids who only told their dearest friends. One of these knew all about the prince; she had also seen the festivities on the ship; she knew where he came from and where his kingdom was situated.

"Come, little sister!" said the other princesses,

and, throwing their arms round each other's shoulders, they rose from the water in a long line, just in front of the prince's palace.

It was built of light yellow glistening stone, with great marble staircases, one of which led into the garden. Magnificent gilded cupolas rose above the roof, and the spaces between the columns which encircled the building were filled with life-like marble statues. Through the clear glass of the lofty windows you could see gorgeous halls adorned with costly silken hangings, and the pictures on the walls were a sight worth seeing. In the midst of the central hall a large fountain played, throwing its jets of spray upwards to a glass dome in the roof, through which the sunbeams lighted up the water and the beautiful plants which grew in the great basin.

She knew now where he lived, and often used to go there in the evenings and by night over the water; she swam much nearer the land than any of the others dared, she even ventured right up the narrow channel under the splendid marble terrace which threw a long shadow over the water. She used to sit here looking at the young prince, who thought he was quite alone in the clear moonlight.

She saw him many an evening sailing about in his beautiful boat, with flags waving and music playing; she used to peep through the green rushes, and if the wind happened to catch her long silvery veil and anyone saw it, they only thought it was a swan flapping its wings.

Many a night she heard the fishermen, who were fishing by torchlight, talking over the good deeds of the young prince; and she was happy to think that she had saved his life when he was drifting about on the waves, half dead, and she could not forget how closely his head had pressed her breast, and how passionately she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of all this, and never saw her even in his dreams.

She became fonder and fonder of mankind, and longed more and more to be able to live among them; their world seemed so infinitely bigger than hers; with their ships they could scour the ocean, they could ascend the mountains high above the clouds, and their wooded, grass-grown lands extended further than her eye could reach. There was so much that she wanted to know, but her sisters could not give an answer to all her questions, so she asked her old grandmother who knew the upper world well, and rightly called it the country above the sea.

"If men are not drowned," asked the little mermaid, "do they live for ever, do they not die as we do down here in the sea?"

"Yes," said the old lady, "they have to die too, and their lifetime is even shorter than ours. We may live here for three hundred years, but when we cease to exist, we become mere foam on the water and do not have so much as a grave among our dear ones. We have no immortal souls, we have no future life; we are just like the green seaweed,

which, once cut down, can never revive again! Men, on the other hand, have a soul which lives for ever, lives after the body has become dust; it rises through the clear air, up to the shining stars! Just as we rise from the water to see the land of mortals, so they rise up to unknown beautiful regions which we shall never see."

"Why have we no immortal souls?" asked the little mermaid sadly. "I would give all my three hundred years to be a human being for one day, and afterwards to have a share in the heavenly kingdom."

"You must not be thinking about that," said the grandmother, "we are much better off and happier than human beings."

"Then I shall have to die and to float as foam on the water, and never hear the music of the waves or see the beautiful flowers or the red sun! Is there nothing I can do to gain an immortal soul?"

"No," said the grandmother, "only if a human being so loved you, that you were more to him than father or mother, if all his thoughts and all his love were so centred in you that he would let the priest join your hands and would vow to be faithful to you here, and to all eternity, then your body would become infused with his soul. Thus, and only thus, could you gain a share in the felicity of mankind. He would give you a soul while yet keeping his own. But that can never happen! That which is your greatest beauty in the sea, your fish's tail, is thought

hideous up on earth, so little do they understand about it; to be pretty there you must have two clumsy supports which they call legs!"

Then the little mermaid sighed and looked sadly at her fish's tail.

"Let us be happy," said the grandmother. "We will hop and skip during our three hundred years of life; it is surely a long enough time, and after it is over, we shall rest all the better. There is to be a court ball to-night."

This was a much more splendid affair than we ever see on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the great ball-room were of thick but transparent glass. Several hundreds of colossal mussel-shells, rose-red and grass-green, were ranged in order round the sides, holding blue lights, which illuminated the whole room and shone through the walls, so that the sea outside was quite lit up. You could see countless fish, great and small, swimming towards the glass walls, some with shining scales of crimson hue, while others were golden and silvery. In the middle of the room was a broad stream of running water, and on this the mermaids and mermen danced to their own beautiful singing. No earthly beings have such lovely voices. The little mermaid sang more sweetly than any of them, and they all applauded her. For a moment she felt glad at heart, for she knew that she had the finest voice either in the sea or on land. But she soon began to think again about the upper world; she could not forget

the handsome prince and her sorrow in not possessing, like him, an immortal soul. Therefore she stole out of her father's palace, and while all within was joy and merriment, she sat sadly in her little garden. Suddenly she heard the sound of a horn through the water, and she thought, "Now he is out sailing up there; he whom I love more than father or mother; he to whom my thoughts cling and to whose hands I am ready to commit the happiness of my life. I will dare anything to win him and to gain an immortal soul! While my sisters are dancing in my father's palace, I will go to the sea witch of whom I have always been very much afraid; she will perhaps be able to advise and help me!"

Thereupon the little mermaid left the garden and went towards the roaring whirlpools at the back of which the witch lived. She had never been that way before; no flowers grew there, no seaweed; only the bare grey sands stretched towards the whirlpools, which like rushing millwheels swirled round, dragging everything that came within reach down to the depths. She had to pass between these boiling eddies to reach the witch's domain, and for a long way the only path led over warm bubbling mud, which the witch called her "peat bog." Her house stood behind this in the midst of a weird forest. All the trees and bushes were polyps, half animal and half plant; they looked like hundred-headed snakes growing out of the sand; the branches

were long slimy arms, with tentacles like wriggling worms, every joint of which from the root to the outermost tip was in constant motion. They wound themselves tightly round whatever they could lay hold of and never let it escape. The little mermaid standing outside was quite frightened, her heart beat fast with terror and she nearly turned back, but then she remembered the prince and the immortal soul of mankind and took courage. She bound her long flowing hair tightly round her head, so that the polyps should not seize her by it, folded her hands over her breast, and darted like a fish through the water, in between the hideous polyps which stretched out their sensitive arms and tentacles towards her. She could see that every one of them had something or other, which they had grasped with their hundred arms, and which they held as if in iron bands. The bleached bones of men who had perished at sea and sunk below peeped forth from the arms of some, while others clutched rudders and sea-chests, or the skeleton of some land animal; and most horrible of all, a little mermaid whom they had caught and suffocated. Then she came to a large opening in the wood where the ground was all slimy, and where some huge fat water-snakes were gambolling about. In the middle of this opening was a house built of the bones of the wrecked; there sat the witch, letting a toad eat out of her mouth, just as mortals let a little canary eat sugar. She called the hideous water-snakes her

little chickens, and allowed them to crawl about on her unsightly body.

"I know very well what you have come here for," said the witch. "It is very foolish of you! All the same you shall have your way, because it will lead you into misfortune, my fine princess. You want to get rid of your fish's tail, and instead to have two stumps to walk about upon like human beings, so that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may win him and an immortal soul." Saying this, she gave such a loud hideous laugh that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground and wriggled about there.

"You are just in the nick of time," said the witch. "After sunrise to-morrow I should not be able to help you until another year had run its course. I will make you a potion, and before sunrise you must swim ashore with it, seat yourself on the beach and drink it; then your tail will divide and shrivel up to what men call beautiful legs; but it hurts, it is as if a sharp sword were running through you. All who see you will say that you are the most beautiful child of man they have ever seen. You will keep your gliding gait, no dancer will rival you, but every step you take will be as if you were treading upon sharp knives, so sharp as to draw blood. If you are willing to suffer all this I am ready to help you!"

"Yes!" said the little princess with a trembling voice, thinking of the prince and of winning an undying soul.

"But remember," said the witch, "when once you have received a human form, you can never be a mermaid again, you will never again be able to dive down through the water to your sisters and to your father's palace. And if you do not succeed in winning the prince's love, so that for your sake he will forget father and mother, cleave to you with his whole heart, let the priest join your hands and make you man and wife, you will gain no immortal soul! The first morning after his marriage with another your heart will break, and you will turn into foam of the sea."

"I will do it," said the little mermaid, as pale as death.

"But you will have to pay me, too," said the witch, "and it is no trifle that I demand. You have the most beautiful voice of any at the bottom of the sea, and I daresay that you think you will fascinate him with it, but you must give me that voice; I will have the best you possess in return for my precious potion! I have to mingle my own blood with it so as to make it as sharp as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take my voice," said the little mermaid, "what have I left?"

"Your beautiful form," said the witch, "your gliding gait, and your speaking eyes; with these you ought surely to be able to bewitch a human heart. Well! have you lost courage? Put out your little tongue and I will cut it off in payment for the powerful draught."

"Let it be done," said the little mermaid, and the witch put on her cauldron to brew the magic potion. "There is nothing like cleanliness," said she, as she scoured the pot with a bundle of snakes; then she punctured her breast and let the black blood drop into the cauldron, and the steam took the most weird shapes, enough to frighten anyone. Every moment the witch threw new ingredients into the pot, and when it boiled the bubbling was like the sound of crocodiles weeping. At last the potion was ready, and it looked like the clearest water.

"There it is," said the witch, and thereupon she cut off the tongue of the little mermaid, who was dumb now and could neither sing nor speak.

"If the polyps should seize you, when you go back through my wood," said the witch, "just drop a single drop of this liquid on them, and their arms and fingers will burst into a thousand pieces." But the little mermaid had no need to do this, for at the mere sight of the bright liquid which sparkled in her hand like a shining star, they drew back in terror. So she soon got past the wood, the bog, and the eddying whirlpools.

She saw her father's palace; the lights were all out in the great ballroom, and no doubt all the household was asleep, but she did not dare to go in now that she was dumb and about to leave her home for ever. She felt as if her heart would break with grief. She stole into the garden and plucked a flower from each of her sister's plots, wafted with her hand

countless kisses towards the palace, and then rose up through the dark blue water.

The sun had not risen when she came in sight of the prince's palace and landed at the beautiful marble steps. The moon was shining bright and clear. The little mermaid drank the burning, stinging draught, and it was like a sharp, two-edged sword running through her tender frame; she fainted away and lay as if she were dead. When the sun rose on the sea she woke up and became conscious of a sharp pang, but just in front of her stood the handsome young prince, fixing his coal-black eyes on her; she cast hers down and saw that her fish's tail was gone, and that she had the prettiest little white legs any maiden could desire; but she was quite naked, so she wrapped her long thick hair around her. The prince asked who she was and how she came there; she looked at him tenderly and with a sad expression in her dark blue eyes, but could not speak. Then he took her by the hand and led her into the palace. Every step she took was, as the witch had warned her beforehand, as if she were treading on sharp knives and spikes, but she bore it gladly; led by the prince she moved as lightly as a bubble, and he and everyone else marvelled at her graceful, gliding gait.

Clothed in the costliest silks and muslins she was the greatest beauty in the palace, but she was dumb and could neither sing nor speak. Beautiful slaves clad in silks and gold came forward and sang to the

prince and his royal parents; one of them sang better than all the others, and the prince clapped his hands and smiled at her; that made the little mermaid very sad, for she knew that she used to sing far better herself. She thought, "Oh! if he only knew that for the sake of being with him I had given up my voice for ever!" Now the slaves began to dance, graceful undulating dances to enchanting music; thereupon the little mermaid, lifting her beautiful white arms and raising herself on tiptoe, glided on the floor with a grace which none of the other dancers had yet attained. With every motion her grace and beauty became more apparent, and her eyes appealed more deeply to the heart than the songs of the slaves. Every one was delighted with it, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced on and on, notwithstanding that every time her foot touched the ground it was like treading on sharp knives. The prince said that she should always be near him, and she was allowed to sleep outside his door on a velvet cushion.

He had a man's dress made for her, so that she could ride about with him. They used to ride through scented woods, where the green branches brushed her shoulders, and little birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed up the highest mountains with the prince, and although her delicate feet bled so that others saw it, she only laughed and followed him until they saw the clouds sailing below them like a flock of birds, taking flight to distant lands.

At home in the prince's palace, when at night the others were asleep, she used to go out on to the marble steps; it cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea-water, and at such times she used to think of those she had left in the deep.

One night her sisters came arm-in-arm; they sang so sorrowfully as they swam on the water that she beckoned to them and they recognised her, and told her how she had grieved them all. After that they visited her every night, and one night she saw, a long way out, her old grandmother (who for many years had not been above the water), and the Merman King with his crown on his head; they stretched out their hands towards her, but did not venture so close to land as her sisters.

Day by day she became dearer to the prince; he loved her as one loves a good, sweet child, but it never entered his head to make her his queen; yet unless she became his wife she would never win an everlasting soul, but on his wedding morning would turn to sea-foam.

"Am I not dearer to you than any of them?" the little mermaid's eyes seemed to say when he took her in his arms and kissed her beautiful brow.

"Yes, you are the dearest one to me," said the prince, "for you have the best heart of them all, and you are fondest of me; you are also like a young girl I once saw, but whom I never expect to see again. I was on board a ship which was wrecked; I was driven on shore by the waves close to a holy Temple

where several young girls were ministering at a service; the youngest of them found me on the beach and saved my life; I saw her but twice. She was the only person I could love in this world; but you are like her, you almost drive her image out of my heart. She belongs to the holy Temple, and therefore by good fortune you have been sent to me: we will never part!"

"Alas! he does not know that it was I who saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I bore him over the sea to the wood, where the Temple stands. I sat behind the foam and watched to see if anyone would come. I saw the pretty girl he loves better than me." And the mermaid heaved a bitter sigh, for she could not weep.

"The girl belongs to the holy Temple, he has said; she will never return to the world, they will never meet again; I am here with him, I see him every day. Yes! I will tend him, love him, and give up my life to him."

But now the rumour ran that the prince was to be married to the beautiful daughter of a neighbouring king, and for that reason was fitting out a splendid ship. It was given out that the prince was going on a voyage to see the adjoining countries, but it was without doubt to see the king's daughter. He was to have a great suite with him, but the little mermaid shook her head and laughed; she knew the prince's intentions much better than any of the others. "I must take this voyage," he had said to her; "I

must go and see the beautiful princess; my parents demand that, but they will never force me to bring her home as my bride; I can never love her! She will not be like the lovely girl in the Temple whom you resemble. If ever I had to choose a bride it would sooner be you with your speaking eyes, my sweet, dumb foundling!" And he kissed her rosy mouth, played with her long hair, and laid his head upon her heart, which already dreamt of human joys and an immortal soul.

"You are not frightened of the sea, I suppose, my dumb child?" he said, as they stood on the proud ship which was to carry them to the country of the neighbouring king; and he told her about storms and calms, about curious fish in the deep, and the marvels seen by divers; and she smiled at his tales, for she knew all about the bottom of the sea much better than anyone else.

At night, in the moonlight, when all were asleep, except the steersman who stood at the helm, she sat at the side of the ship trying to pierce the clear water with her eyes, and fancied she saw her father's palace, and above it her old grandmother with her silver crown on her head, looking up through the cross currents towards the keel of the ship. Then her sisters rose above the water, they gazed sadly at her, wringing their white hands; she beckoned to them, smiled, and was about to tell them that all was going well and happily with her, when the cabin boy approached, and the sisters dived down; but

he supposed that the white objects he had seen were nothing but flakes of foam.

The next morning the ship entered the harbour of the neighbouring king's magnificent city. The church bells rang and trumpets were sounded from every lofty tower, while the soldiers paraded with flags flying and glittering bayonets. There was a *fête* every day; there was a succession of balls, and receptions followed one after the other, but the princess was not yet present; she was being brought up a long way off, in a holy Temple they said, and was learning all the royal virtues. At last she came. The little mermaid stood eager to see her beauty, and she was obliged to confess that a lovelier creature she had never beheld. Her complexion was exquisitely pure and delicate, and her trustful eyes of the deepest blue shone through their dark lashes.

"It is you," said the prince, "you who saved me when I lay almost lifeless on the beach?" and he clasped his blushing bride to his heart. "Oh! I am too happy!" he exclaimed to the little mermaid. "A greater joy than I had dared to hope for has come to pass. You will rejoice at my joy, for you love me better than anyone." Then the little mermaid kissed his hand, and felt as if her heart were broken already.

His wedding morn would bring death to her and change her to foam.

All the church bells pealed and heralds rode through the town proclaiming the nuptials. Upon

every altar throughout the land fragrant oil was burnt in costly silver lamps. Amidst the swinging of censers by the priests, the bride and bridegroom joined hands and received the bishop's blessing. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, stood holding the bride's train, but her ears were deaf to the festal strains, her eyes saw nothing of the sacred ceremony; she was thinking of her coming death and of all that she had lost in this world.

That same evening the bride and bridegroom embarked, amidst the roar of cannon and the waving of banners. A royal tent of purple and gold, softly cushioned, was raised amidships where the bridal pair were to repose during the calm cool night.

The sails swelled in the wind and the ship skimmed lightly and almost without motion over the transparent sea.

At dusk lanterns of many colours were lighted and the sailors danced merrily on deck. The little mermaid could not help thinking of the first time she came up from the sea and saw the same splendour and gaiety; and she now threw herself among the dancers, whirling, as a swallow skims through the air when pursued. The onlookers cheered her in amazement, never had she danced so divinely; her delicate feet pained her as if they were cut with knives, but she did not feel it, for the pain at her heart was much sharper. She knew that it was the last night that she would breathe the same air as he, and would look upon the mighty deep, and the blue,

starry heavens; an endless night without thought and without dreams awaited her, who neither had a soul, nor could win one. The joy and revelry on board lasted till long past midnight; she went on laughing and dancing, with the thought of death all the time in her heart. The prince caressed his lovely bride and she played with his raven locks, and with their arms entwined they retired to the gorgeous tent. All became hushed and still on board the ship, only the steersman stood at the helm; the little mermaid laid her white arms on the gunwale and looked eastwards for the pink tinted dawn; the first sunbeam, she knew, would be her death. Then she saw her sisters rise from the water; they were as pale as she was, their beautiful long hair no longer floated on the breeze, for it had been cut off.

"We have given it to the witch to obtain her help, so that you may not die to-night! She has given us a knife, here it is, look how sharp it is! Before the sun rises, you must plunge it into the prince's heart, and when his warm blood sprinkles your feet they will join together and grow into a tail, and you will once more be a mermaid; you will be able to come down into the water to us, and to live out your three hundred years before you are turned into dead, salt, sea-foam. Make haste! you or he must die before sunrise! Our old grandmother is so full of grief that her white hair has fallen off as ours fell under the witch's scissors. Slay the prince and come back to us! Quick! quick! Do you not see the rosy streak

in the sky? In a few moments the sun will rise and then you must die!" Saying this, they heaved a wondrous deep sigh and sank among the waves.

The little mermaid drew aside the purple curtain from the tent and looked at the beautiful bride asleep with her head on the prince's breast; she bent over him and kissed his fair brow, looked at the sky where the dawn was spreading fast, looked at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes on the prince, who, in his dream, called his bride by name; yes! she alone was in his thoughts!—For a moment the knife quivered in her grasp, then she threw it far out among the waves, now rosy in the morning light, and where it fell the water bubbled up like drops of blood.

Once more she looked at the prince, with her eyes already dimmed by death, then dashed overboard and fell, her body dissolving into foam.

Now the sun rose from the sea and with its kindly beams warmed the deadly cold foam, so that the little mermaid did not feel the chill of death. She saw the bright sun, and above her floated hundreds of beauteous, ethereal beings through which she could see the white ship and the rosy heavens; their voices were melodious, but so spirit-like that no human ear could hear them, any more than an earthly eye could see their forms. Light as bubbles they floated through the air without the aid of wings. The little mermaid perceived that she had a form like theirs; it gradually took shape out of the foam. "To whom am I

coming?" said she, and her voice sounded like that of the other beings, so unearthly in its beauty that no music of ours could reproduce it.

"To the daughters of the air!" answered the others. "A mermaid has no undying soul, and can never gain one without winning the love of a human being. Her eternal life must depend upon an unknown power. Nor have the daughters of the air an everlasting soul, but by their own good deeds they may create one for themselves. We fly to the tropics where mankind is the victim of hot and pestilent winds; there we bring cooling breezes. We diffuse the scent of flowers all around, and bring refreshment and healing in our train. When, for three hundred years, we have laboured to do all the good in our power, we gain an undying soul and take a part in the everlasting joys of mankind. You, poor little mermaid, have with your whole heart struggled for the same thing as we have struggled for. You have suffered and endured, raised yourself to the spirit world of the air; and now, by your own good deeds you may, in the course of three hundred years, work out for yourself an undying soul."

Then the little mermaid lifted her transparent arms towards God's sun, and for the first time shed tears.

On board ship all was again life and bustle; she saw the prince with his lovely bride searching for her; they looked sadly at the bubbling foam, as if they knew that she had thrown herself into the

waves. Unseen she kissed the bride on her brow, smiled at the prince, and rose aloft with the other spirits of the air to the rosy clouds which sailed above.

"In three hundred years we shall thus float into Paradise."

"We might reach it sooner," whispered one. "Unseen we flit into those homes of men where there are children, and for every day that we find a good child who gives pleasure to its parents and deserves their love, God shortens our time of probation. The child does not know when we fly through the room; and when we smile with pleasure at it, one year of our three hundred is taken away. But if we see a naughty or badly disposed child, we cannot help shedding tears of sorrow, and every tear adds a day to the time of our probation."

THE GOBLIN AND THE HUCKSTER

THERE was once a real student who lived in an attic and possessed nothing at all. There was also a real huckster who lived on the ground floor and owned the whole house. The goblin made friends with him, for every Christmas he was given a plateful of porridge with a lump of butter in it. The huckster could very well afford this; so the goblin stayed in the shop, which was a very instructive place.

One evening the student came in by the back door to buy himself some candles and cheese; he had no one to send, so he went himself. He got what he asked for and paid for it, and the huckster nodded to him and said "good evening" to him, and his wife did the same. She was a woman who could do more than nod; she had "the gift of the gab"! The student returned the nod, and then remained standing, buried in something he found printed on the paper in which the cheese was wrapped. It was a page torn out of an old book which ought never to have been torn up at all; it was an old book of poetry.

"There is more of it lying there," said the huckster. "I gave a few coffee-beans to an old woman for it; if you will give me twopence you may have the rest of it."

"Thank you," said the student; "let me have it instead of the cheese! I can eat plain bread and butter just as well; it would be a sin if the whole of that book were to be torn to bits. You are a capital fellow and a practical man, but you know no more about poetry than that tub!"

Now this was a very rude speech, especially to the tub, but the huckster laughed; of course it was said as a kind of joke. But the goblin was much annoyed that anyone dared to say such a thing to a huckster who was a landlord and who sold the best butter.

At night when the shop was shut and everybody

in bed except the student, the goblin went in and stole the goodwife's long tongue which she had no use for when she was asleep. On whatever object in the room he laid this article, it conferred the power of speech, and whatever the object, it became able to express its thoughts and feelings as glibly as the goodwife herself. But only one could have it at a time, and this was a very good thing or they would all have been talking at once.

The goblin laid the tongue down upon the tub which contained the old newspapers.

"Is it really true," asked he, "that you do not know what poetry is?"

"Of course I know," said the tub; "it is the kind of stuff which is printed at the foot of the newspaper columns, and is sometimes cut out. I imagine that I have more of it within me than the student has, and after all I am only a poor tub compared to the huckster."

Then the goblin put the tongue upon the coffee-mill, and what a pace it went at! He also put it on the butter-cask and the cash-box. They were all of the same opinion as the tub; and what the majority agree upon must be respected.

"Now the student shall have it," said the goblin, and he stole silently up the back stairs to the attic where the student lived. There was a light burning, and the goblin peeped through the key-hole, and saw that the student was reading the tattered book from downstairs. But how bright the room was! A

clear ray of light shot forth from the book, which widened out to a stem, and then to a mighty tree, which rose and spread its branches right over the student. The leaves were delightfully fresh, and every flower was like a lovely girl's face, some with dark and sparkling eyes, while others were wonderfully blue and clear. Every fruit was a shining star and the air was filled with music. No, the little goblin had never imagined, much less seen or taken part in such splendours. So there he stood on tip-toe peeping and peeping till the light was put out. The student blew out his lamp and went to bed, but the little goblin remained by the door, for the sweet songs still echoed through the air, making a charming lullaby for the student who was taking his rest.

"This is splendid," said the goblin; "I hadn't expected anything of the kind!—I think I will stay with the student!"—and he thought—and thought again—and then he sighed, "but the student has no porridge!" Then he went away—yes, he went back to the huckster, and it was a good thing he went, for the tub had almost used up the goodwife's volubility. He had given a description of all he contained from one side, and now he was just about to turn himself over to repeat the same from the other side, when the goblin came and took away the lady's tongue to return it to her. But the whole shop, from the cash-drawer to the firewood, took their opinions from the tub from that time; and

they respected it so highly and confided in it to such a degree, that when the huckster afterwards read the Art and Theatrical announcements in his *Times*, the evening one, they all thought that they came from the tub.

But the little goblin no longer sat quietly listening to all the wisdom and learning downstairs; no, as soon as a light appeared in the attic, it had the same effect upon him as if the rays of light had been stout anchor hawsers, for they drew him upwards and forced him to go and peep through the key-hole. A mighty power surged around him, such as we feel when the Almighty moves over the face of the rolling waters in a storm, and he burst into tears; he did not himself know wherefore, but there was some soothing in these tears. How splendid it must be to sit with the student under that tree, the tree of knowledge; but that might not be—he was glad even to stand at the key-hole.

He still came to peep through the key-hole when the autumn winds blew down upon it from the trap-door; it was cold, very cold, but the little creature did not feel it till the light went out in the attic and the sounds died away on the wind. Then how he shivered! he crept down again to his cosy corner; it was warm and comfortable there! And when the Christmas porridge appeared with a lump of butter in it—why, then the huckster was master.

But in the middle of the night the goblin was roused up by a frightful uproar and banging on the

window shutters; the people outside were thundering on them. The watchman was blowing his whistle; there was a great fire, the whole street was lighted up. Was it in this house, or the next? Where? It was terrible. The huckster's wife was so upset that she took the gold earrings out of her ears and put them into her pocket, so as at least to save something. The huckster ran to look for his bonds, and the maid-servant for the silk mantle she had just managed to afford herself. Everybody wanted to save the most precious thing he had, and the goblin wanted to do the same, so with a hop and a skip he was up the stairs and into the student's room. The student stood calmly at the window looking at the fire which was in the opposite house. The little goblin seized the marvellous book which was lying on the table, stuffed it into his red cap, and held it with both his hands; the greatest treasure in the house was saved! Then he rushed away, right on to the roof to the very top of the chimney, and there he sat lighted up by the blaze opposite. He still held his red cap tightly grasped with both hands, in which the treasure was hidden.

Now he knew the leaning of his heart, and to whom he really belonged; but when the fire was out and he thought the matter over—why, then—"I will divide myself between them," he said. "I can't give up the huckster, because of the porridge." In this he was quite human! We others go to the huckster too—for the porridge.

THE HAPPY FAMILY

THE largest green leaf in this country is certainly the burdock-leaf. If you hold it in front of you, it is large enough for an apron; and if you hold it over your head, it is almost as good as an umbrella, it is so wonderfully large. A burdock never grows alone; where it grows, there are many more, and it is a splendid sight; and all this splendour is good for snails. The great white snails, which grand people in olden times used to have made into fricassees; and when they had eaten them, they would say, "Oh, what a delicious dish!" for these people really thought them good; and these snails lived on burdock-leaves, and for them the burdock was planted.

There was once an old estate where no one now lived to require snails; indeed, the owners had all died out, but the burdock still flourished; it grew over all the beds and walks of the garden—its growth had no check—till it became at last quite a forest of burdocks. Here and there stood an apple or a plum tree; but for this, nobody would have thought the place had ever been a garden. It was burdock from one end to the other; and here lived the last two surviving snails. They knew not themselves how old they were; but they could remember the time when there were a great many more of them, and that they were descended from a family which came from

foreign lands, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and theirs. They had never been away from the garden; but they knew that another place once existed in the world, called the Duke's Palace Castle, in which some of their relations had been boiled till they became black, and were then laid on a silver dish; but what was done afterwards they did not know. Besides, they could not imagine exactly how it felt to be boiled and placed on a silver dish; but no doubt it was something very fine and highly genteel. Neither the cockchafer, nor the toad, nor the earth-worm, whom they questioned about it, would give them the least information; for none of their relations had ever been cooked or served on a silver dish. The old white snails were the most aristocratic race in the world—they knew that. The forest had been planted for them, and the nobleman's castle had been built entirely that they might be cooked and laid on silver dishes.

They lived quite retired and very happily; and as they had no children of their own, they had adopted a little common snail, which they brought up as their own child. The little one would not grow, for he was only a common snail; but the old people, particularly the mother-snail, declared that she could easily see how he grew; and when the father said he could not perceive it, she begged him to feel the little snail's shell, and he did so, and found that the mother was right.

One day it rained very fast. "Listen, what a

drumming there is on the burdock-leaves; tum, tum, tum; tum, tum, tum," said the father-snail.

"There come the drops," said the mother; "they are trickling down the stalks. We shall have it very wet here presently. I am very glad we have such good houses, and that the little one has one of his own. There has been really more done for us than for any other creature; it is quite plain that we are the most noble people in the world. We have houses from our birth, and the burdock forest has been planted for us. I should very much like to know how far it extends, and what lies beyond it."

"There can be nothing better than we have here," said the father-snail; "I wish for nothing more."

"Yes, but I do," said the mother; "I should like to be taken to the palace, and boiled, and laid upon a silver dish, as was done to all our ancestors; and you may be sure it must be something very uncommon."

"The nobleman's castle, perhaps, has fallen to decay," said the father-snail, "or the burdock wood may have grown over it, so that those who live there cannot get out. You need not be in a hurry; you are always so impatient, and the youngster is getting just the same. He has been three days creeping to the top of that stalk. I feel quite giddy when I look at him."

"You must not scold him," said the mother-snail; "he creeps so very carefully. He will be the joy of our home; and we old folks have nothing else to live

for. But have you ever thought where we are to get a wife for him? Do you think that farther out in the wood there may be others of our race?"

"There may be black snails, no doubt," said the old snail; "black snails without houses; but they are so vulgar and conceited too. But we can give the ants a commission; they run here and there, as if they all had so much business to get through. They, most likely, will know of a wife for our youngster."

"I certainly know a most beautiful bride," said one of the ants; "but I fear it would not do, for she is a queen."

"That does not matter," said the old snail; "has she a house?"

"She has a palace," replied the ant—"a most beautiful ant-palace with seven hundred passages."

"Thank you," said the mother-snail; "but our boy shall not go to live in an ant-hill. If you know of nothing better, we will give the commission to the white gnats; they fly about in rain and sunshine; they know the burdock wood from one end to the other."

"We have a wife for him," said the gnats; "a hundred man-steps from here there is a little snail with a house, sitting on a gooseberry-bush; she is quite alone, and old enough to be married. It is only a hundred man-steps from here."

"Then let her come to him," said the old people. "He has the whole burdock forest; she has only a bush."

So they brought the little lady-snail. She took eight days to perform the journey; but that was just as it ought to be; for it showed her to be one of the right breeding. And then they had a wedding. Six glow-worms gave as much light as they could; but in other respects it was all very quiet; for the old snails could not bear festivities or a crowd. But a beautiful speech was made by the mother-snail. The father could not speak; he was too much overcome. Then they gave the whole burdock forest to the young snails as an inheritance, and repeated what they had so often said, that it was the finest place in the world, and that if they led upright and honourable lives, and their family increased, they and their children might some day be taken to the nobleman's palace, to be boiled black, and laid on a silver dish. And when they had finished speaking, the old couple crept into their houses, and came out no more; for they slept.

The young snail pair now ruled in the forest, and had a numerous progeny. But as the young ones were never boiled or laid in silver dishes, they concluded that the castle had fallen into decay, and that all the people in the world were dead; and as nobody contradicted them, they thought they must be right. And the rain fell upon the burdock-leaves, to play the drum for them, and the sun shone to paint colours on the burdock forest for them, and they were very happy; the whole family were entirely and perfectly happy.

THE GARDEN OF PARADISE

THERE was once a king's son; nobody had so many or such beautiful books as he had. He could read about everything which had ever happened in this world, and see it all represented in the most beautiful pictures. He could get information about every nation and every country; but as to where the Garden of Paradise was to be found, not a word could he discover, and this was the very thing he thought most about. His grandmother had told him, when he was quite a little fellow and was about to begin his school life, that every flower in the Garden of Paradise was a delicious cake, and that the pistils were full of wine. In one flower history was written, in another geography or tables; you had only to eat the cake and you knew the lesson. The more you ate, the more history, geography and tables you knew. All this he believed then; but as he grew older and wiser and learnt more, he easily perceived that the delights of the Garden of Paradise must be far beyond all this.

"Oh, why did Eve take of the tree of knowledge? Why did Adam eat the forbidden fruit? If it had only been I it would not have happened! never would sin have entered the world!"

This is what he said then, and he still said it

when he was seventeen; his thoughts were full of the Garden of Paradise.

He walked into the wood one day; he was alone, for that was his greatest pleasure. Evening came on, the clouds drew up and it rained as if the whole heaven had become a sluice from which the water poured in sheets; it was as dark as it is in the deepest well. Now he slipped on the wet grass, and then he fell on the bare stones which jutted out of the rocky ground. Everything was dripping, and at last the poor Prince hadn't got a dry thread on him. He had to climb over huge rocks where the water oozed out of the thick moss. He was almost fainting; just then he heard a curious murmuring and saw in front of him a big lighted cave. A fire was burning in the middle, big enough to roast a stag, which was in fact being done; a splendid stag with its huge antlers was stuck on a spit, being slowly turned round between the hewn trunks of two fir trees. An oldish woman, tall and strong enough to be a man dressed up, sat by the fire throwing on logs from time to time.

"Come in by all means!" she said; "sit down by the fire so that your clothes may dry!"

"There is a shocking draught here," said the Prince, as he sat down on the ground.

"It will be worse than this when my sons come home!" said the woman. "You are in the cavern of the winds; my sons are the four winds of the world! Do you understand?"

"Who are your sons?" asked the Prince.

"Well, that's not so easy to answer when the question is stupidly put," said the woman. "My sons do as they like; they are playing rounders now with the clouds up there in the great hall," and she pointed up into the sky.

"Oh indeed!" said the Prince. "You seem to speak very harshly, and you are not so gentle as the women I generally see about me!"

"Oh I daresay they have nothing else to do! I have to be harsh if I am to keep my boys under control! But I can do it, although they are a stiff-necked lot! Do you see those four sacks hanging on the wall? They are just as frightened of them as you used to be of the cane behind the looking-glass. I can double the boys up, I can tell you, and then they have to go into the bag; we don't stand upon ceremony, and there they have to stay; they can't get out to play their tricks till it suits me to let them. But here we have one of them." It was the Northwind who came in with an icy blast, great hailstones peppered about the floor and snowflakes drifted in. He was dressed in bearskin trousers and jacket, and he had a sealskin cap drawn over his ears. Long icicles were hanging from his beard, and one hailstone after another dropped down from the collar of his jacket.

"Don't go straight to the fire," said the Prince. "You might easily get chilblains!"

"Chilblains!" said the Northwind with a loud

laugh. "Chilblains! they are my greatest delight! What sort of a feeble creature are you? How did you get into the cave of the winds?"

"He is my guest," said the old woman, "and if you are not pleased with that explanation you may go into the bag! Now you know my opinion!"

This had its effect, and the Northwind told them where he came from, and where he had been for the last month.

"I come from the Arctic seas," he said. "I have been on Behring Island with the Russian walrus-hunters. I sat at the helm and slept when they sailed from the North Cape, and when I woke now and then the stormy petrels were flying about my legs; they are queer birds; they give a brisk flap with their wings and then keep them stretched out and motionless, and even then they have speed enough."

"Pray don't be too long-winded," said the mother of the winds. "So at last you got to Behring Island!"

"It's perfectly splendid! there you have a floor to dance upon, as flat as a pancake, half-thawed snow, with moss; there were bones of whales and Polar bears lying about, they looked like the legs and arms of giants covered with green mould. One would think that the sun had never shone on them. I gave a little puff to the fog so that one could see the shed. It was a house built of wreckage and covered with the skins of whales; the flesh side was turned outwards; it was all red and green; a living

Polar bear sat on the roof growling. I went to the shore and looked at the birds' nests, looked at the unfledged young ones screaming and gaping; then I blew down thousands of their throats and they learnt to shut their mouths. Lower down the walruses were rolling about like monster maggots with pigs' heads, and teeth a yard long!"

"You're a good story-teller, my boy!" said his mother. "It makes my mouth water to hear you!"

"Then there was a hunt! The harpoons were plunged into the walruses' breasts and the steaming blood spurted out of them, like fountains over the ice. Then I remembered my part of the game! I blew up and made my ships, the mountain-high icebergs, nip the boats; whew! how they whistled and how they screamed, but I whistled louder. They were obliged to throw the dead walruses, chests and ropes out upon the ice! I shook the snowflakes over them and let them drift southwards to taste the salt water. They will never come back to Behring Island!"

"Then you've been doing evil!" said the mother of the winds.

"What good I did, the others may tell you," said he. "But here we have my brother from the west; I like him best of all, he smells of the sea and brings a splendid cool breeze with him!"

"Is that the little Zephyr?" asked the Prince.

"Yes, certainly it is Zephyr, but he is not so little

as all that. He used to be a pretty boy once, but that's gone by!"

He looked like a wild man of the woods, but he had a padded hat on so as not to come to any harm. He carried a mahogany club cut in the American mahogany forests. It could not be anything less than that.

"Where do you come from?" asked his mother.

"From the forest wildernesses!" he said, "where the thorny creepers make a fence between every tree, where the water-snake lies in the wet grass and where human beings seem to be superfluous!"

"What did you do there?"

"I looked at the mighty river, saw where it dashed over the rocks in dust and flew with the clouds to carry the rainbow. I saw the wild buffalo swimming in the river, but the stream carried him away; he floated with the wild duck, which soared into the sky at the rapids; but the buffalo was carried over with the water. I liked that and blew a storm, so that the primeval trees had to sail too, and they were whirled about like shavings."

"And you have done nothing else?" asked the old woman.

"I have been turning somersaults in the Savannahs, patting the wild horse, and shaking down cocoa-nuts! Oh, yes, I have plenty of stories to tell! But one need not tell everything. You know that very well, old woman!" and then he kissed his mother so heartily that she nearly fell backwards; he was indeed a wild boy.

The Southwind appeared now in a turban and a flowing bedouin's cloak.

"It is fearfully cold in here," he said, throwing wood on the fire; "it is easy to see that the Northwind got here first!"

"It is hot enough here to roast a polar bear," said the Northwind.

"You are a polar bear yourself!" said the Southwind.

"Do you want to go into the bag?" asked the old woman. "Sit down on that stone and tell us where you have been."

"In Africa, mother!" he answered. "I have been chasing the lion with the Hottentots in Kaffirland! What grass there is on those plains! as green as an olive. The gnu was dancing about, and the ostriches ran races with me, but I am still the fastest. I went to the desert with its yellow sand. It looks like the bottom of the sea. I met a caravan! They were killing their last camel to get water to drink, but it wasn't much they got. The sun was blazing above, and the sand burning below. There were no limits to the outstretched desert. Then I burrowed into the fine loose sand and whirled it up in great columns—that was a dance! You should have seen how despondently the dromedaries stood, and the merchant drew his caftan over his head. He threw himself down before me as if I had been Allah, his god. Now they are buried, and there is a pyramid of sand over them all; when I blow it away, some-

time the sun will bleach their bones, and then travellers will see that people have been there before; otherwise you would hardly believe it in the desert!"

"Then you have only been doing harm!" said the mother. "Into the bag you go!" And before he knew where he was she had the Southwind by the waist and in the bag; it rolled about on the ground, but she sat down upon it, and then it had to be quiet.

"Your sons are lively fellows!" said the Prince.

"Yes, indeed," she said; "but I can master them! Here comes the fourth."

It was the Eastwind, and he was dressed like a Chinaman.

"Oh, have you come from that quarter?" said the mother. "I thought you had been in the Garden of Paradise."

"I am only going there to-morrow!" said the Eastwind. "It will be a hundred years to-morrow since I have been there. I have just come from China, where I danced round the porcelain tower till all the bells jingled. The officials were flogged in the streets, the bamboo canes were broken over their shoulders, and they were all people ranging from the first to the ninth rank. They shrieked 'Many thanks, Father and benefactor,' but they didn't mean what they said, and I went on ringing the bells and singing 'Tsing, tsang, tsu!'"

"You're quite uproarious about it!" said the old woman. "It's a good thing you are going to the

Garden of Paradise to-morrow; it always has a good effect on your behaviour. Mind you drink deep of the well of wisdom, and bring a little bottleful home to me."

"That I will," said the Eastwind. "But why have you put my brother from the south into the bag? Out with him! He must tell me about the phœnix; the Princess always wants to hear about that bird when I call every hundred years. Open the bag! then you'll be my sweetest mother, and I'll give you two pocketfuls of tea as green and fresh as when I picked it!"

"Well, for the sake of the tea, and because you are my darling, I will open my bag!"

She did open it, and the Southwind crept out, but he was quite crestfallen because the strange Prince had seen his disgrace.

"Here is a palm leaf for the Princess!" said the Southwind. "The old phœnix, the only one in the world, gave it to me. He has scratched his whole history on it with his bill, for the hundred years of his life, and she can read it for herself. I saw how the phœnix set fire to his nest himself and sat on it while it burnt, like the widow of a Hindoo. Oh, how the dry branches crackled, how it smoked, and what a smell there was! At last it all burst into flame; the old bird was burnt to ashes, but his egg lay glowing in the fire; it broke with a loud bang and the young one flew out. Now it rules over all the birds and it is the only phœnix in the world. He

bit a hole in the leaf I gave you; that is his greeting to the Princess."

"Let us have something to eat now!" said the mother of the winds; and they all sat down to eat the roast stag, and the Prince sat by the side of the Eastwind, so they soon became good friends.

"I say," said the Prince, "just tell me who is this Princess, and where is the Garden of Paradise?"

"Oh ho!" said the Eastwind, "if that is where you want to go you must fly with me to-morrow. But I may as well tell you that no human being has been there since Adam and Eve's time. You know all about them, I suppose, from your Bible stories?"

"Of course," said the Prince.

"When they were driven away the Garden of Eden sank into the ground, but it kept its warm sunshine, its mild air, and all its charms. The queen of the fairies lives there. The Island of Bliss, where death never enters, and where living is a delight, is there. Get on my back to-morrow and I will take you with me; I think I can manage it! But you mustn't talk now, I want to go to sleep."

When the Prince woke up in the early morning, he was not a little surprised to find that he was already high above the clouds. He was sitting on the back of the Eastwind, who was holding him carefully; they were so high up that woods and fields, rivers and lakes, looked like a large coloured map.

"Good morning," said the Eastwind. "You may

as well sleep a little longer, for there is not much to be seen in this flat country below us, unless you want to count the churches. They look like chalk dots on the green board."

He called the fields and meadows "the green board."

"It was very rude of me to leave without saying good-bye to your mother and brothers," said the Prince.

"One is excused when one is asleep!" said the Eastwind, and they flew on faster than ever. You could mark their flight by the rustling of the trees as they passed over the woods; and whenever they crossed a lake, or the sea, the waves rose and the great ships dipped low down in the water, like floating swans. Towards evening the large towns were amusing as it grew dark, with all their lights twinkling now here, now there, just as when one burns a piece of paper and sees all the little sparks like children coming home from school. The Prince clapped his hands, but the Eastwind told him he had better leave off and hold tight, or he might fall and find himself hanging on to a church steeple.

The eagle in the great forest flew swiftly, but the Eastwind flew more swiftly still. The Kossack on his little horse sped fast over the plains, but the Prince sped faster still.

"Now you can see the Himalayas!" said the Eastwind. "They are the highest mountains in Asia; we shall soon reach the Garden of Paradise."

They took a more southerly direction, and the air became scented with spices and flowers. Figs and pomegranates grew wild, and the wild vines were covered with blue and green grapes. They both descended here and stretched themselves on the soft grass, where the flowers nodded to the wind, as much as to say, "Welcome back."

"Are we in the Garden of Paradise now?" asked the Prince.

"No, certainly not!" answered the Eastwind. "But we shall soon be there. Do you see that wall of rock and the great cavern where the wild vine hangs like a big curtain? We have to go through there! Wrap yourself up in your cloak; the sun is burning here, but a step further on it is icy cold. The bird which flies past the cavern has one wing out here in the heat of summer, and the other is there in the cold of winter."

"So that is the way to the Garden of Paradise!" said the Prince.

Now they entered the cavern. Oh, how icily cold it was! but it did not last long. The Eastwind spread his wings, and they shone like the brightest flame; but what a cave it was! Large blocks of stone, from which the water dripped, hung over them in the most extraordinary shapes; at one moment it was so low and narrow that they had to crawl on hands and knees, the next it was as wide and lofty as if they were in the open air. It looked like a chapel of the dead, with mute organ pipes and petrified banners.

"We seem to be journeying along Death's road to the Garden of Paradise!" said the Prince, but the Eastwind never answered a word, he only pointed before them where a beautiful blue light was shining. The blocks of stone above them grew dimmer and dimmer, and at last they became as transparent as a white cloud in the moonshine. The air was also deliciously soft, as fresh as on the mountain tops, and as scented as down among the roses in the valley.

A river ran there as clear as the air itself, and the fish in it were like gold and silver. Purple eels, which gave out blue sparks with every curve, gambolled about in the water; and the broad leaves of the water-lilies were tinged with the hues of the rainbow, while the flower itself was like a fiery orange flame, nourished by the water, just as oil keeps a lamp constantly burning. A firm bridge of marble, as delicately and skilfully carved as if it were lace and glass beads, led over the water to the Island of Bliss, where the Garden of Paradise bloomed.

The Eastwind took the Prince in his arms and bore him over. The flowers and leaves there sang all the beautiful old songs of his childhood, but sang them more wonderfully than any human voice could sing them.

Were these palm-trees or giant water-plants growing here? The Prince had never seen such rich and mighty trees. The most wonderful climbing plants hung in wreaths, such as are only to be found

pictured in gold and colours on the margins of old books of the Saints or entwined among their initial letters. It was the most extraordinary combination of birds, flowers, and scrolls.

Close by on the grass stood a flock of peacocks with their brilliant tails outspread. Yes, indeed, it seemed so, but when the Prince touched them he saw that they were not birds but plants. They were big dock leaves, which shone like peacocks' tails. Lions and tigers sprang like agile cats among the green hedges, which were scented with the blossom of the olive, and the lion and the tiger were tame. The wild dove, glistening like a pearl, beat the lion's mane with his wings; and the antelope, otherwise so shy, stood by nodding, just as if he wanted to join the game.

The Fairy of the Garden now advanced to meet them; her garments shone like the sun, and her face beamed like that of a happy mother rejoicing over her child. She was young and very beautiful, and was surrounded by a band of lovely girls, each with a gleaming star in her hair.

When the Eastwind gave her the inscribed leaf from the Phœnix her eyes sparkled with delight. She took the Prince's hand and led him into her palace, where the walls were the colour of the brightest tulips in the sunlight. The ceiling was one great shining flower, and the longer one gazed into it the deeper the calyx seemed to be. The Prince went to the window, and looking through one of

the panes, saw the Tree of Knowledge, with the Serpent, and Adam and Eve standing by.

"Are they not driven out?" he asked, and the Fairy smiled and explained that Time had burned a picture into each pane, but not of the kind one usually sees; they were alive, the leaves on the trees moved, and the people came and went like the reflections in a mirror.

Then he looked through another pane, and he saw Jacob's dream, with the ladder going straight up into heaven, and angels with great wings were fluttering up and down. All that had ever happened in this world lived and moved on these window panes; only Time could imprint such wonderful pictures.

The Fairy smiled and led him into a large, lofty room, the walls of which were like transparent paintings of faces, one more beautiful than the other. These were millions of the Blessed who smiled and sang, and all their songs melted into one perfect melody. The highest ones were so tiny that they seemed smaller than the very smallest rosebud, no bigger than a pin-point in a drawing. In the middle of the room stood a large tree, with handsome drooping branches; golden apples, large and small, hung like oranges among its green leaves. It was the Tree of Knowledge, of whose fruit Adam and Eve had eaten. From every leaf hung a shining red drop of dew; it was as if the tree wept tears of blood.

"Now let us get into the boat," said the Fairy. "We shall find refreshment on the swelling waters. The boat rocks, but it does not move from the spot; all the countries of the world will pass before our eyes."

It was a curious sight to see the whole coast move. Here came lofty snow-clad Alps, with their clouds and dark fir trees. The horn echoed sadly among them, and the shepherd yodelled sweetly in the valleys. Then banian trees bent their long drooping branches over the boat, black swans floated on the water, and the strangest animals and flowers appeared on the shore. This was New Holland, the fifth portion of the world, which glided past them with a view of its blue mountains. They heard the song of priests, and saw the dances of the savages to the sound of drums and pipes of bone. The pyramids of Egypt reaching to the clouds, with fallen columns, and Sphynxes half buried in sand, next sailed past them. Then came the Aurora Borealis blazing over the peaks of the north; they were fireworks which could not be imitated. The Prince was so happy, and he saw a hundred times as much as we have described.

"Can I stay here always?" he asked.

"That depends upon yourself," answered the Fairy. "If you do not, like Adam, allow yourself to be tempted to do what is forbidden, you can stay here always."

"I will not touch the apples on the Tree of Know-

ledge," said the Prince. "There are thousands of other fruits here as beautiful."

"Test yourself, and if you are not strong enough, go back with the Eastwind who brought you. He is going away now, and will not come back for a hundred years; the time will fly in this place like a hundred hours, but that is a long time for temptation and sin. Every evening when I leave you I must say, 'Come with me,' and I must beckon to you; but stay behind. Do not come with me, for with every step you take your longing will grow stronger. You will reach the hall where grows the Tree of Knowledge; I sleep beneath its fragrant, drooping branches. You will bend over me and I must smile, but if you press a kiss upon my lips, Paradise will sink deep down into the earth, and it will be lost to you. The sharp winds of the wilderness will whistle round you, the cold rain will drop from your hair. Sorrow and labour will be your lot."

"I will remain here!" said the Prince.

And the Eastwind kissed him on the mouth and said: "Be strong; then we shall meet again in a hundred years. Farewell! farewell!" and the Eastwind spread his great wings; they shone like poppies at the harvest time, or the Northern Lights in a cold winter.

"Good-bye! good-bye!" whispered the flowers. Storks and pelicans flew in a line like waving ribbons, conducting him to the boundaries of the Garden.

"Now we begin our dancing!" said the Fairy;

" at the end, when I dance with you as the sun goes down, you will see me beckon to you and cry 'Come with me'; but do not come. I have to repeat it every night for a hundred years. Every time you resist, you will grow stronger, and at last you will not even think of following. To-night is the first time. Remember my warning!"

And the Fairy led him into a large hall of white transparent lilies; the yellow stamens in each formed a little golden harp which echoed the sound of strings and flutes. Lovely girls, slender and lissom, dressed in floating gauze, glided in the dance, and sang of the joy of living—that they would never die—and that the Garden of Paradise would bloom for ever.

The sun went down, and the sky was bathed in golden light which gave the lilies the effect of roses; and the Prince drank of the foaming wine handed to him by the maidens. He felt such joy as he had never known before; he saw the background of the hall opening where the Tree of Knowledge stood in a radiancy which blinded him. The song proceeding from it was soft and lovely, like his mother's voice; and she seemed to say, "My child, my beloved child!"

Then the Fairy beckoned to him and said so tenderly, "Come with me," that he rushed towards her, forgetting his promise, forgetting everything on the very first evening that she smiled and beckoned to him.

The fragrance in the scented air around grew stronger, the harps sounded sweeter than ever, and it seemed as if the millions of smiling heads in the hall where the Tree grew, nodded and sang, "One must know everything. Man is lord of the earth." They were no longer tears of blood which fell from the Tree; it seemed to him that they were red shining stars.

"Come with me, come with me," spoke those trembling tones, and at every step the Prince's cheeks burnt hotter and hotter and his blood coursed more rapidly.

"I must go," he said, "it is no sin; I must see her asleep, nothing will be lost if I do not kiss her, and that I will not do. My will is strong."

The Fairy dropped her shimmering garment, drew back the branches and, a moment after, was hidden within their depths.

"I have not sinned yet!" said the Prince, "nor will I"; then he drew back the branches. There she lay asleep already, beautiful as only the Fairy in the Garden of Paradise can be. She smiled in her dreams; he bent over her and saw the tears welling up under her eyelashes.

"Do you weep for me?" he whispered. "Weep not, beautiful maiden. I only now understand the full bliss of Paradise; it surges through my blood and through my thoughts. I feel the strength of the angels and of everlasting life in my mortal limbs! If it were to be everlasting night to me, a

moment like this were worth it!" and he kissed away the tears from her eyes; his mouth touched hers.

Then came a sound like thunder, louder and more awful than any he had ever heard before, and everything around collapsed. The beautiful Fairy, the flowery Paradise, sank deeper and deeper. The Prince saw it sink into the darkness of night; it shone far off like a little tiny twinkling star. The chill of death crept over his limbs; he closed his eyes and lay long as if he were dead.

The cold rain fell on his face, and the sharp wind blew around his head, and at last his memory came back. "What have I done?" he sighed. "I have sinned like Adam, sinned so heavily that Paradise has sunk low beneath the earth!" And he opened his eyes; he could still see the star, the far-away star, which twinkled like Paradise; it was the morning star in the sky. He got up and found himself in the wood near the cave of the winds, and the mother of the winds sat by his side. She looked angry and raised her hand.

"So soon as the first evening!" she said. "I thought as much; if you were my boy, you should go into the bag!"

"Ah, he shall soon go there!" said Death. He was a strong old man, with a scythe in his hand and great black wings. "He shall be laid in a coffin, but not now; I only mark him and then leave him for a time to wander about on the earth to expiate

his sin and to grow better. I will come some time. When he least expects me, I shall come back, lay him in a black coffin, put it on my head, and fly to the skies. The Garden of Paradise blooms there too, and if he is good and holy he shall enter into it; but if his thoughts are wicked and his heart still full of sin, he will sink deeper in his coffin than Paradise sank, and I shall only go once in every thousand years to see if he is to sink deeper or to rise to the stars, the twinkling stars up there."

A PICTURE FROM THE RAMPARTS

It is autumn, and we are standing on the ramparts round the citadel, looking at the ships sailing on the Sound, and at the opposite coast of Sweden which stands out clearly in the evening sunlight. Behind us the ramparts fall away steeply; around are stately trees from which the golden leaves are falling fast. Down below us we see some dark and gloomy buildings, surrounded with wooden palisades, and inside these, where the sentries are walking up and down, it is darker still, yet not so gloomy as it is behind yon iron grating; that is where the worst convicts are confined. A ray from the setting sun falls into the bare room. The sun shines upon good and bad alike! The gloomy, savage prisoner looks bitterly at the

chilly sunbeam. A little bird flutters against the grating. The bird sings to good and bad alike! It twitters softly for a little while, and remains perched, flutters its wings, picks a feather from its breast, and puffs its plumage up. The bad man in chains looks at it, a milder expression steals over his hideous face. A thought which is not quite clear to himself steals into his heart; it is related to the sunshine coming through the grating, related to the scent of violets, which in spring grow so thickly outside the window. Now is heard the music of a huntsman's horn, clear and lively; the bird flies away from the grating, the sunbeam disappears, and all is dark again in the narrow cell, dark in the heart of the bad man. Yet the sun has shone into it, and the bird has sung its song.

Continue, ye merry notes! The evening is mild, the sea is calm and bright as any mirror.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

MANY years ago there was an Emperor who was so excessively fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on them. He cared nothing about his soldiers, nor for the theatre, nor for driving in the woods except for the sake of showing off his new clothes. He had a costume for every hour in the day, and instead

of saying as one does about any other King or Emperor, "He is in his council chamber," here one always said, "The Emperor is in his dressing-room."

Life was very gay in the great town where he lived; hosts of strangers came to visit it every day, and among them one day two swindlers. They gave themselves out as weavers, and said that they knew how to weave the most beautiful stuffs imaginable. Not only were the colours and patterns unusually fine, but the clothes that were made of the stuffs had the peculiar quality of becoming invisible to every person who was not fit for the office he held, or if he was impossibly dull.

"Those must be splendid clothes," thought the Emperor. "By wearing them I should be able to discover which men in my kingdom are unfitted for their posts. I shall distinguish the wise men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must order some of that stuff to be woven for me."

He paid the two swindlers a lot of money in advance so that they might begin their work at once.

They did put up two looms and pretended to weave, but they had nothing whatever upon their shuttles. At the outset they asked for a quantity of the finest silk and the purest gold thread, all of which they put into their own bags while they worked away at the empty looms far into the night.

"I should like to know how those weavers are getting on with the stuff," thought the Emperor; but he felt a little queer when he reflected that anyone

who was stupid or unfit for his post would not be able to see it. He certainly thought that he need have no fears for himself, but still he thought he would send somebody else first to see how it was getting on. Everybody in the town knew what wonderful power the stuff possessed, and everyone was anxious to see how stupid his neighbour was.

"I will send my faithful old minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor. "He will be best able to see how the stuff looks, for he is a clever man and no one fulfils his duties better than he does!"

So the good old minister went into the room where the two swindlers sat working at the empty loom.

"Heaven preserve us!" thought the old minister, opening his eyes very wide. "Why, I can't see a thing!" But he took care not to say so.

Both the swindlers begged him to be good enough to step a little nearer, and asked if he did not think it a good pattern and beautiful colouring. They pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he could, but he could not see anything, for of course there was nothing to see.

"Good heavens!" thought he, "is it possible that I am a fool? I have never thought so, and nobody must know it. Am I not fit for my post? It will never do to say that I cannot see the stuffs."

"Well, sir, you don't say anything about the stuff," said the one who was pretending to weave.

"Oh, it is beautiful! quite charming!" said the old minister, looking through his spectacles; "this

pattern and these colours! I will certainly tell the Emperor that the stuff pleases me very much."

"We are delighted to hear you say so," said the swindlers, and then they named all the colours and described the peculiar pattern. The old minister paid great attention to what they said, so as to be able to repeat it when he got home to the Emperor.

Then the swindlers went on to demand more money, more silk, and more gold, to be able to proceed with the weaving; but they put it all into their own pockets—not a single strand was ever put into the loom, but they went on as before weaving at the empty loom.

The Emperor soon sent another faithful official to see how the stuff was getting on, and if it would soon be ready. The same thing happened to him as to the minister; he looked and looked, but as there was only the empty loom, he could see nothing at all.

"Is not this a beautiful piece of stuff?" said both the swindlers, showing and explaining the beautiful pattern and colours which were not there to be seen.

"I know I am not a fool!" thought the man, "so it must be that I am unfit for my good post! It is very strange, though! However, one must not let it appear!" So he praised the stuff he did not see, and assured them of his delight in the beautiful colours and the originality of the design. "It is absolutely charming!" he said to the Emperor. Everybody in the town was talking about this splendid stuff.

Now the Emperor thought he would like to see it

while it was still on the loom. So, accompanied by a number of selected courtiers, among whom were the two faithful officials who had already seen the imaginary stuff, he went to visit the crafty impostors, who were working away as hard as ever they could at the empty loom.

"It is magnificent!" said both the honest officials. "Only see, Your Majesty, what a design! What colours!" And they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought no doubt the others could see the stuff.

"What!" thought the Emperor; "I see nothing at all! This is terrible! Am I a fool? Am I not fit to be Emperor? Why, nothing worse could happen to me!"

"Oh, it is beautiful!" said the Emperor. "It has my highest approval!" and he nodded his satisfaction as he gazed at the empty loom. Nothing would induce him to say that he could not see anything.

The whole suite gazed and gazed, but saw nothing more than all the others. However, they all exclaimed with His Majesty, "It is very beautiful!" and they advised him to wear a suit made of this wonderful cloth on the occasion of a great procession which was just about to take place. "It is magnificent! gorgeous! excellent!" went from mouth to mouth; they were all equally delighted with it. The Emperor gave each of the rogues an order of knighthood to be worn in their buttonholes, and the title of "Gentlemen Weavers."

The swindlers sat up the whole night, before the

day on which the procession was to take place, burning sixteen candles; so the people might see how anxious they were to get the Emperor's new clothes ready. They pretended to take the stuff off the loom. They cut it out in the air with a huge pair of scissors, and they stitched away with needles without any thread in them. At last they said: "Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready!"

The Emperor, with his grandest courtiers, went to them himself, and both the swindlers raised one arm in the air, as if they were holding something, and said: "See, these are the trousers, this is the coat, here is the mantle!" and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web. One might think one had nothing on, but that is the very beauty of it!"

"Yes!" said all the courtiers, but they could not see anything, for there was nothing to see.

"Will Your Imperial Majesty be graciously pleased to take off your clothes," said the impostors, "so that we may put on the new ones, here before the great mirror."

The Emperor took off all his clothes, and the impostors pretended to give him one article of dress after the other, of the new ones which they had pretended to make. They pretended to fasten something round his waist and to tie on something; this was the train, and the Emperor turned round and round in front of the mirror.

"How well His Majesty looks in the new clothes! How becoming they are!" cried all the people round.

"What a design, and what colours! They are most gorgeous robes!"

"The canopy is waiting outside which is to be carried over Your Majesty in the procession," said the master of the ceremonies.

"Well, I am quite ready," said the Emperor. "Don't the clothes fit well?" and then he turned round again in front of the mirror, so that he should seem to be looking at his grand things.

The chamberlains who were to carry the train stooped and pretended to lift it from the ground with both hands, and they walked along with their hands in the air. They dared not let it appear that they could not see anything.

Then the Emperor walked along in the procession under the gorgeous canopy, and everybody in the streets and at the windows exclaimed, "How beautiful the Emperor's new clothes are! What a splendid train! And they fit to perfection!" Nobody would let it appear that he could see nothing, for then he would not be fit for his post, or else he was a fool.

None of the Emperor's clothes had been so successful before.

"But he has no fine robes at all," said a little child.

"Oh, listen to the innocent!" said its father; and one person whispered to the other what the child had said. "He has no fine robes at all; a child says he has no fine robes at all!"

"But he has no fine robes at all!" at last cried all the people.

The Emperor writhed, for he knew it was true, but he thought, "The procession must go on now," so held himself stiffer than ever, and the chamberlains held up the invisible train.

THE STORY OF A MOTHER

A POOR mother sat watching by the cradle of her little baby. She was very anxious and sorrowful; she dreaded that it was going to be taken from her. Its little eyes were closed, and it was deathly pale; it breathed very faintly, with now and then a long trembling breath like a sigh. The mother grew sadder and sadder as she looked at it.

There was a knock at the door, and a poor old man came in; he was wrapped in a big horse-cloth, which he needed to keep him warm, it was so very cold. Outside everything was covered with ice and snow, and a biting wind whistled round the house.

As the old man was shaking with cold, and the baby had dropped asleep for a moment, the mother got up and put some beer in a little mug on the stove to warm for him. The old man sat rocking the cradle, and the woman sat down on a chair close to him and watched the sick child, who drew its breath more deeply still, and feebly waved its little hand about.

"You think I shall keep him, don't you?" said she. "The Lord won't take him from me?"

And the old man, who was Death himself, nodded in such a curious way that she did not know whether it meant yes or no. The mother bent her head, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. Her head was so heavy, she had not closed her eyes for three nights and days, and she fell asleep, but only for a moment; then she started up shivering with cold.

"What is it?" she said, looking about to every side. But the old man was gone, and her little child was gone; he had taken it with him. The old clock in the corner whirred and whirred, and the big lead weight ran right down to the ground with a bang, and then the clock stopped too.

But the poor mother rushed out of the house calling for her child.

Out there, all in the snow, sat a woman in long black clothes, and she said, "Death has been into your room. I saw him hurrying away with your child; he goes faster than the wind, and he never brings back what he takes away."

"Only tell me which way he went," said the mother. "Tell me the way, and I shall find him."

"I know the way," said the woman in the black clothes; "but before I tell it you, you must sing me all the songs you used to sing to your baby; I like them; I have often heard them before. I am Night. I saw your tears while you sang."

"I will sing them all—all," said the mother; "but don't stop me; let me go that I may find my little baby."

But Night stood still and silent, and the mother wrung her hands, sang and wept. There were many songs, but many, many more tears.

At last Night said, " Go to the right, into the dark pine wood. I saw Death take that road with your child."

In the heart of the wood she came to a cross-road, and she did not know which way to go. There was a blackthorn bush just at the crossing with neither leaf nor flower on it, for it was the hard winter time, and icicles hung from the branches.

" Have you not seen Death pass by with my little child? "

" Yes," said the blackthorn bush; " but I won't tell you which way he went unless you will warm me at your heart. I am dying of cold; I shall soon be nothing but ice."

And she pressed the blackthorn bush to her heart so tightly, to warm it, that the thorns ran into her flesh, and great drops of blood flowed; but fresh green leaves and flowers sprang out on the thorn bush that cold winter night, such was the warmth of a sad mother's heart, and the thorn bush told her the way to go.

Then she came to a great lake, on which there were neither ships nor boats. The lake was not frozen hard enough to bear her, nor was it open or shallow enough for her to wade through it; but over it somehow she must go if she would find her child. She lay down to drink up the water, but that was of course

impossible; the poor mother thought, however, that a miracle might happen.

"Now, this will never do!" said the lake. "Let us see if we two can't make a bargain! I collect pearls, and your eyes are the brightest I have seen; if you will cry them out for me, I will carry you over to the great hot-house where Death lives and looks after his plants and flowers, every one of which is a human life."

"Oh, what would I not give to reach my child!" said the weeping mother, and she wept more than ever, till her eyes dropped down to the bottom of the lake and became two precious pearls. Then the lake lifted her as if she had been in a swing, and she was borne in a moment from the shore where she stood to the other side. Here stood a curious house a mile wide; one could hardly tell whether it was a mountain covered with woods and hollows, or whether it was built up; but the poor mother could not see it, you know, for she had cried her eyes out.

"Where shall I find Death, who carried off my little child?" she said.

"He has not come back here yet," said the old crone, whose business it was to tend Death's big hot-house. "How ever did you get here, and who helped you?"

"Our Lord has helped me," said she. "He is merciful, and so will you be. Where shall I find my child?"

"I don't know," said the woman, "and you can't

see. Many flowers and trees have withered in the night; Death will soon come and transplant them. You know that every human being has his or her tree of life, or flower, according as they are made; they look like other plants, but they have beating human hearts. A child's heart can beat too. Walk about here, perhaps you will recognise your child's; but what will you give me if I tell you what more you must do?"

"I have nothing to give," said the mother sadly, "but I will go to the end of the world for you."

"I've got nothing to do there," said the woman; "but you can give me your long black hair; I'm sure you know yourself that it is beautiful, and I fancy it. I'll give you my white hair in place of it, that will always be something."

"Don't you ask more than that?" said she; "I will give it you gladly," and she gave her her beautiful black hair and received the old woman's white hair in exchange.

Then they went into Death's big hot-house, where the flowers and trees grew curiously mixed up together. Here were delicate hyacinths under bell glasses, and there were great strong peonies; here were water plants, some quite fresh, others sickly with water snakes wound round them, and little black crayfish pinching their stems. Here were beautiful palm trees, oaks and plane trees; there grew parsley and sweet-scented thyme; every tree and every flower had its name. Each one was a

human life, living still, one in China, one in Greenland, scattered round about the world. There were big trees in small pots, growing in a stunted way, ready to burst their pots; and there were also, in other places, little tiresome flowers in rich earth surrounded with moss, and covered and tended. But the sad mother bent over all the tiniest plants and listened for the human heart beating in them. Among a million she knew her child's at once.

"This is it!" she cried, stretching out her hands over a little blue crocus which hung feebly down to one side.

"Don't touch the flower," said the old woman, "but place yourself here, so that when Death comes (for I expect him every minute) you may prevent him from pulling it up; threaten him that you will do the same to the other flowers, then he will be frightened. He has to answer to our Lord for them; not one may be pulled up without His leave."

All at once an icy wind whistled through the place, and the blind mother felt that Death had come.

"How didst thou find thy way hither?" asked he. "How couldst thou get here before me?"

"I am a mother," she said.

Then Death stretched out his long hand towards the delicate little flower, but she clasped her hands tightly round his, in terror lest he should touch one of the leaves. Death breathed upon her hands; she felt that his breath was colder than the coldest wind, and her hands fell numbly away from his.

"You have no power against me, you see," said Death.

"But our Lord has!" said she.

"I only do His will," said Death. "I am His gardener! I take all His flowers and trees and plant them in the Garden of Paradise, in the Unknown Land; but how they grow, and what they do there, I dare not tell thee!"

"Give me back my child!" said the mother, with tears and prayers; suddenly she clutched with both hands two beautiful flowers growing close by, and called out to Death, "I will pull up all your flowers, for I am in despair!"

"Touch them not!" said Death. "Thou sayst that thou art unhappy, yet wouldst thou make some other mother equally unhappy——!"

"Some other mother!" said the poor woman, letting go the flowers at once.

"Here hast thou thine eyes back again," said Death; "I fished them up out of the lake, they shone so brightly; I did not know that they were thine. Take them back again, they are brighter than ever. Look down into the deep well close by; I will name the names of those flowers thou wast about to pluck, and thou shalt see their whole lives, and all that future thou wast about to destroy."

And she looked down into the well; it was happiness to see how one of them became a blessing to the world, and to see how much joy and pleasure was unfolded around him. Then she saw the life of the

other, and that life was all sorrow and need, sin and misery.

"Both lives are according to the will of God!" said Death.

"Which of them is the flower of misery, and which of blessedness?"

"That I may not tell thee," said Death; "but I may tell thee that one of the flowers was thy own child's; it was thy child's fate thou sawest, thine own child's future."

Then the mother shrieked in terror. "Which was my child? tell me that! Save the wretched one! Save my child from all the misery! Rather carry it away! bear it into God's kingdom! Forget my tears, forget my prayers, and all that I have said and done!"

"I do not understand thee!" said Death; "wilt thou have thy child back, or shall I take it whither thou knowest not?"

The mother wrung her hands, fell upon her knees, and prayed to Our Father, "Do not listen to me when I pray against Thy will, which is best; do not listen, do not listen!" And she bent her head in humble submission.

Then Death carried her child into the Unknown Land.

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER

THERE were once five and twenty tin soldiers, all brothers, for they were the offspring of the same old tin spoon. Each man shouldered his gun, kept his eyes well to the front, and wore the smartest red and blue uniform imaginable. The first thing they heard in their new world, when the lid was taken off the box, was a little boy clapping his hands and crying, "Soldiers, soldiers!" It was his birthday, and they had just been given to him; so he lost no time in setting them up on the table. All the soldiers were exactly alike with one exception, and he differed from the rest in having only one leg. For he was made last, and there was not quite enough tin left to finish him. However, he stood just as well on his one leg, as the others on two; in fact he is the very one who is to become famous. On the table where they were being set up, were many other toys; but the chief thing which caught the eye was a delightful paper castle. You could see through the tiny windows, right into the rooms. Outside there were some little trees surrounding a small mirror, representing a lake, whose surface reflected the waxen swans which were swimming about on it. It was altogether charming, but the prettiest thing of all was a little maiden standing at the open door of the castle. She, too, was cut out of paper,

but she wore a dress of the lightest gauze, with a dainty little blue ribbon over her shoulders, by way of a scarf, set off by a brilliant spangle, as big as her whole face. The little maid was stretching out both arms, for she was a dancer; and in the dance, one of her legs was raised so high into the air that the tin soldier could see absolutely nothing of it, and supposed that she, like himself, had but one leg.

"That would be the very wife for me!" he thought; "but she is much too grand; she lives in a palace, while I only have a box, and then there are five and twenty of us to share it. No, that would be no place for her! but I must try to make her acquaintance!" Then he lay down full length behind a snuff-box, which stood on the table. From that point he could have a good look at the little lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance.

Late in the evening the other soldiers were put into their box, and the people of the house went to bed. Now was the time for the toys to play; they amused themselves with paying visits, fighting battles, and giving balls. The tin soldiers rustled about in their box, for they wanted to join the games, but they could not get the lid off. The nut-crackers turned somersaults, and the pencil scribbled nonsense on the slate. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and joined in, but his remarks were in verse. The only two who did not move were the tin soldier and the little dancer. She stood as

stiff as ever on tip-toe, with her arms spread out: he was equally firm on his one leg, and he did not take his eyes off her for a moment.

Then the clock struck twelve, when pop! up flew the lid of the snuff box, but there was no snuff in it, no! There was a little black goblin, a sort of Jack-in-the-box.

"Tin soldier!" said the goblin, "have the goodness to keep your eyes to yourself."

But the tin soldier feigned not to hear.

"Ah! you just wait till to-morrow," said the goblin.

In the morning when the children got up they put the tin soldier on the window frame, and, whether it was caused by the goblin or by a puff of wind, I do not know, but all at once the window burst open, and the soldier fell head-foremost from the third sto ey.

It was a terrific descent, and he landed at last, with his leg in the air, and rested on his cap, with his bayonet fixed between two paving-stones. The maid-servant and the little boy ran down at once to look for him; but although they almost trod on him, they could not see him. Had the soldier only called out, "Here I am," they would easily have found him, but he did not think it proper to shout when he was in uniform.

Presently it began to rain, and the drops fell faster and faster, till there was a regular torrent. When it was over, two street boys came along.

"Look out!" said one; "there is a tin soldier! He shall go for a sail."

So they made a boat out of a newspaper and put the soldier into the middle of it, and he sailed away down the gutter; both boys ran alongside clapping their hands. Good gracious! what waves there were in the gutter, and what a current! but then it certainly had rained cats and dogs. The paper boat danced up and down, and now and then whirled round and round. A shudder ran through the tin soldier, but he remained undaunted, and did not move a muscle, only looked straight before him with his gun shouldered. All at once the boat drifted under a long wooden tunnel, and it became as dark as it was in his box.

"Where on earth am I going to now!" thought he. "Well, well, it is all the fault of that goblin! Oh, if only the little maiden were with me in the boat it might be twice as dark for all I should care!"

At this moment a big water rat, who lived in the tunnel, came up.

"Have you a pass?" asked the rat. "Hand up your pass!"

The tin soldier did not speak, but clung still tighter to his gun. The boat rushed on, the rat close behind. Phew, how he gnashed his teeth and shouted to the bits of stick and straw!

"Stop him, stop him, he hasn't paid his toll! he hasn't shown his pass!"

But the current grew stronger and stronger; the tin soldier could already see daylight before him at the end of the tunnel; but he also heard a roaring sound, fit to strike terror to the bravest heart. Just imagine! Where the tunnel ended the stream rushed straight into the big canal. That would be just as dangerous for him as it would be for us to shoot a great rapid.

He was so near the end now that it was impossible to stop. The boat dashed out; the poor tin soldier held himself as stiff as he could; no one should say of him that he even winced.

The boat swirled round three or four times, and filled with water to the edge; it must sink. The tin soldier stood up to his neck in water, and the boat sank deeper and deeper. The paper became limper and limper, and at last the water went over his head—then he thought of the pretty little dancer, whom he was never to see again, and this refrain rang in his ears:

Onward! Onward! Soldier!
For death thou canst not shun.

At last the paper gave way entirely and the soldier fell through—but at the same moment he was swallowed by a big fish.

Oh, how dark it was inside the fish! it was worse than being in the tunnel, even; and then it was so narrow! But the tin soldier was as dauntless as ever, and lay full length, shouldering his gun.

The fish rushed about and made the most frantic movements. At last it became quite quiet, and, after a time, a flash like lightning pierced it. The soldier was once more in the broad daylight, and some one called out loudly, " A tin soldier! " The fish had been caught, taken to market, sold, and brought into the kitchen, where the cook cut it open with a large knife. She took the soldier up by the waist, with two fingers, and carried him into the parlour, where everyone wanted to see the wonderful man, who had travelled about in the stomach of a fish; but the tin soldier was not at all proud. They set him up on the table, and, wonder of wonders! he found himself in the very same room that he had been in before. He saw the very same children, and the toys were still standing on the table, as well as the beautiful castle with the pretty little dancer.

She still stood on one leg, and held the other up in the air. You see she also was unbending. The soldier was so much moved that he was ready to shed tears of tin, but that would not have been fitting. He looked at her, and she looked at him, but they said never a word. At this moment one of the little boys took up the tin soldier, and, without rhyme or reason, threw him into the fire. No doubt the little goblin in the snuff-box was to blame for that. The tin soldier stood there, lighted up by the flame, and in the most horrible heat; but whether it was the heat of the real fire, or the warmth of his feelings, he did not know. He had lost all his gay colour; it might have

been from his perilous journey, or it might have been from grief, who can tell?

He looked at the little maiden, and she looked at him; and he felt that he was melting away, but he still managed to keep himself erect, shouldering his gun bravely.

A door was suddenly opened, the draught caught the little dancer and she fluttered like a sylph, straight into the fire, to the soldier, blazed up and was gone!

By this time the soldier was reduced to a mere lump, and when the maid took away the ashes next morning she found him, in the shape of a small tin heart. All that was left of the dancer was her spangle, and that was burnt as black as a coal.

THE BELL

In the evening, at sunset, when glimpses of golden clouds could just be seen among the chimney pots, a curious sound would be heard, first by one person, then by another; it was like a church bell, but it only lasted a moment because of the rumble of vehicles and the street cries.

"There is the evening bell," people would say; "the sun is setting."

Those who went outside the town where the houses were more scattered, each with its garden or little

meadow, saw the evening star and heard the tones of the bell much better. It seemed as if the sound came from a church buried in silent, fragrant woods, and people looked in that direction, feeling quite solemn.

Time passed, and still people said one to the other, "Can there be a church in the woods? That bell has such a wonderfully sweet sound; shall we go and look at it closer?" The rich people drove and the poor ones walked, but it was a very long way; when they reached a group of willows which grew on the outskirts of the wood, they sat down and looked up among the long branches, thinking that they were really in the heart of the forest. A confectioner from the town came out and pitched a tent there, and then another confectioner, and he hung a bell up over his tent. This bell was tarred so as to stand the rain, and the clapper was wanting. When people went home again they said it had been so romantic, and that meant something beyond mere tea. Three persons protested that they had penetrated right through the forest to the other side, and that they had heard the same curious bell all the time, but that then it sounded as if it came from the town.

One of them wrote a poem about it, and said that it sounded like a mother's voice to a beloved child; no melody could be sweeter than the chimes of this bell.

The Emperor's attention was also drawn to it, and he promised that anyone who really discovered where

the sound came from should receive the title of "The world's bell-ringer," even if there were no bell at all.

A great many people went to the woods for the sake of earning an honest penny, but only one of them brought home any kind of explanation. No one had been far enough, not even he himself, but he said that the sound of the bell came from a very big owl in a hollow tree; it was a wise owl, which perpetually beat its head against the tree, but whether the sound came from its head or from the hollow tree he could not say with any certainty. All the same he was appointed "World's bell-ringer," and every year he wrote a little treatise on the owl, but nobody was much the wiser for it.

Now on a certain Confirmation day the priest had preached a very moving sermon; all the young people about to be confirmed had been much touched by it; it was a very important day for them. They were leaving childhood behind and becoming grown-up persons; the child's soul was, as it were, to be transformed into that of a responsible being. It was a beautiful sunny day, and after the Confirmation the young people walked out of the town, and they heard the sound of the unknown bell, more than usually loud, coming from the wood. On hearing it they all felt anxious to go further and see it; all except three. The first of these had to go home to try on her ball-dress; it was this very dress and this very ball which were the reason of her having being confirmed this time; otherwise it would have been put off. The

second was a poor boy, who had borrowed his tail-coat and boots from the landlord's son, and he had to return them at the appointed time. The third said that he had never been anywhere without his parents, that he had always been a good child and he meant to continue so, although he was confirmed; nobody ought to have made fun of this resolve; but he did not escape being laughed at.

So these three did not go; the others trudged off. The sun shone and the birds sang and the newly-confirmed young people took each other by the hand and sang with them; they had not yet received any position in life, they were all equal in the eye of the Lord on the day of their Confirmation. Soon two of the smallest ones got tired, and they returned to town; two little girls sat down and made wreaths, so they did not go either. When the others reached the willows where the confectioners had their tents, they said, "Now, then, here we are; the bell doesn't exist, it is only something people imagine!"

Just then the bell was heard in the wood, with its deep, rich notes; and four or five of them decided after all to penetrate further into the wood. The underwood was so thick and close that it was quite difficult to advance. The woodruff grew almost too high; convolvulus and brambles hung in long garlands from tree to tree, where the nightingales sang and the sunbeams played. It was deliciously peaceful, but there was no path for the girls, their clothes would have been torn to shreds. There were great

boulders overgrown with many-coloured mosses, and fresh springs trickled among them with a curious little gurgling sound.

"Surely that cannot be the bell!" said one of the young people, as he lay down to listen. "This must be thoroughly looked into." So he stayed behind and let the others go on.

They came to a little hut made of bark and branches, overhung by a crab-apple, as if it wanted to shake all its bloom over the roof, which was covered with roses. The long sprays clustered round the gable, and on it hung a little bell. Could this be the one they sought? Yes, they were all agreed that it must be, except one; he said it was far too small and delicate to be heard so far away as they had heard it, and that the tones which moved all hearts were quite different from these. He who spoke was a king's son, and so the others said, "That kind of fellow must always be wiser than anyone else."

So they let him go on alone, and as he went he was more and more overcome by the solitude of the wood; but he still heard the little bell with which the others were so pleased, and now and then, when the wind came from the direction of the confectioners, he could hear demands for tea.

But the deep-toned bell sounded above them all, and it seemed as if there was an organ playing with it, and the sounds came from the left, where the heart is placed.

There was a rustling among the bushes, and a little boy stood before the king's son; he had wooden shoes on, and such a small jacket that the sleeves did not cover his wrists. They knew each other, for he was the boy who had had to go back to return the coat and the boots to the landlord's son. He had done this, changed back into his shabby clothes and wooden shoes, and then, drawn by the deep notes of the bell, had returned to the wood again.

"Then we can go together," said the king's son.

But the poor boy in the wooden shoes was too bashful. He pulled down his short sleeves, and said he was afraid he could not walk quickly enough; besides which, he thought the bell ought to be looked for on the right, because that side looked the most beautiful.

"Then we shan't meet at all," said the king's son, nodding to the poor boy, who went into the thickest and darkest part of the wood, where the thorns tore his shabby clothes and scratched his face, hands and feet till they bled. The king's son got some good scratches too, but he at least had the sun shining upon his path. We are going to follow him, for he is a bright fellow.

"I must and will find the bell," said he, "if I have to go to the end of the world."

Some horrid monkeys sat up in the trees, grinning and showing their teeth.

"Shall we pelt him?" said they. "Shall we thrash him? he is a king's son."

But he went confidently on further and further into the wood, where the most extraordinary flowers grew. There were white star-like lilies with blood-red stamens, pale blue tulips which glistened in the sun, and apple trees on which the apples looked like great shining soap-bubbles. You may fancy how these trees glittered in the sun. Round about were beautiful green meadows, where stags and hinds gambolled under the spreading oaks and beeches. Mosses and creepers grew in the fissures where the bark of the trees was broken away. There were also great glades with quiet lakes, where white swans swam about, flapping their wings. The king's son often stopped and listened, for he sometimes fancied that the bell sounded from one of these lakes; but then again he felt sure that it was not there, but further in the wood.

Now the sun began to go down, and the clouds were fiery red; a great stillness came over the wood, and he sank upon his knees, sang his evening psalm, and said, "Never shall I find what I seek; now the sun is going down, the night is coming on—the dark night; perhaps I could catch one more glimpse of the round, red sun before it sinks beneath the earth. I will climb up on to those rocks; they are as high as the trees."

He seized the roots and creepers, and climbed up the slippery stones where the water snakes wriggled and the toads seemed to croak at him; but he reached the top before the sun disappeared. Seen

from this height, oh! what splendour lay before him! The ocean, the wide, beautiful ocean, its long waves rolling towards the shore! The sun still stood like a great, shining altar, out there where sea and sky met. Everything melted away into glowing colours; the wood sang, the ocean sang, and his heart sang with them. All Nature was like a vast, holy temple, where trees and floating clouds were the pillars, flowers and grass the woven tapestry, and the heaven itself a great dome. The red colours vanished as the sun went down, but millions of stars peeped out; they were like countless diamond lamps, and the king's son spread out his arms towards heaven, sea and forest. At that moment, from the right-hand path came the poor boy with the short sleeves and wooden shoes. He had reached the same goal just as soon by his own road. They ran towards each other, and clasped each other's hands in that great temple of Nature and Poetry, and above them sounded the invisible holy bell; happy spirits floated round it to the strains of a joyous Hallelujah.

THE MONEY-PIG

In a nursery where a number of toys lay scattered about, a money-box stood on the top of a very high wardrobe. It was made of clay in the shape of a pig, and had been bought from the potter. In the back of the pig was a slit, and this slit had been enlarged with a knife, so that dollars, or crown-pieces, might slip through; and, indeed, there were two in the box, besides a number of pence. The money-pig was stuffed so full that it could no longer rattle, which is the highest state of perfection to which a money-pig can attain. There he stood upon the cupboard, high and lofty, looking down upon everything else in the room. He knew very well that he had enough inside him to buy up all the other toys, and this gave him a very good opinion of his own value. The rest thought of this fact also, although they did not express it, for there were so many other things to talk about. A large doll, still handsome, though rather old, for her neck had been mended, lay inside one of the drawers which was partly open. She called out to the others, "Let us have a game at being men and women; that is something worth playing at."

Upon this there was a great uproar; even the engravings, which hung in frames on the wall, turned round in their excitement, and showed that they had a wrong side to them, although they had not the

least intention to expose themselves in this way, or to object to the game. It was late at night, but as the moon shone through the windows, they had light at a cheap rate. And as the game was now to begin, all were invited to take part in it, even the children's waggon, which certainly belonged to the coarser playthings. "Each has its own value," said the waggon; "we cannot all be noblemen; there must be some to do the work."

The money-pig was the only one who received a written invitation. He stood so high that they were afraid he would not accept a verbal message. But in his reply he said, if he had to take a part, he must enjoy the sport from his own home; they were to arrange for him to do so; and so they did. The little toy theatre was therefore put up in such a way that the money-pig could look directly into it. Some wanted to begin with a comedy, and afterwards to have a tea-party and a discussion for mental improvement, but they commenced with the latter first. The rocking-horse spoke of training and races; the waggon of railways and steam power, for these subjects belonged to each of their professions, and it was right they should talk of them. The clock talked politics—"Tick, tick"; he professed to know what was the time of day, but there was a whisper that he did not go correctly. The bamboo cane stood by, looking stiff and proud; he was vain of his brass ferrule and silver top, and on the sofa lay two worked cushions, pretty but stupid. When the play at the

little theatre began, the rest sat and looked on; they were requested to applaud and stamp, or crack, when they felt gratified with what they saw. But the riding-whip said he never cracked for old people, only for the young who were not yet married. "I crack for everybody," said the cracker.

"Yes, and a fine noise you make," thought the audience, as the play went on.

It was not worth much, but it was very well played, and all the characters turned their painted sides to the audience, for they were made only to be seen on one side. The acting was wonderful, excepting that sometimes they came out beyond the lamps, because the wires were a little too long. The doll, whose neck had been darned, was so excited that the place in her neck burst, and the money-pig declared he must do something for one of the players, as they had all pleased him so much. So he made up his mind to remember one of them in his will, as the one to be buried with him in the family vault, whenever that event should happen. They all enjoyed the comedy so much, that they gave up all thoughts of the tea party, and only carried out their idea of intellectual amusement, which they called playing at men and women; and there was nothing wrong about it, for it was only play. All the while, each one thought most of himself, or of what the money-pig could be thinking. His thoughts were on, as he supposed, a very distant time—of making his will, and of his burial, and of when it might all come to pass. Cer-

tainly sooner than he expected—for all at once down he came from the top of the press, fell on the ground, and was broken to pieces. Then the pennies hopped and danced about in the most amusing manner. The little ones twirled round like tops, and the large ones rolled away as far as they could, especially the one great silver crown-piece who had often wanted to go out into the world, and now he had his wish as well as all the rest of the money. The pieces of the money-pig were thrown into the dust-bin, and the next day there stood a new money-pig on the cupboard, but it had not a farthing in its inside yet, and therefore, like the old one, it could not rattle. This was the beginning with him, and we will make it the end of our story.

THE NIGHTINGALE

In China, as you know, the emperor is a Chinaman, and all the people around him are Chinamen too. It is many years since the story I am going to tell you happened, but that is all the more reason for telling it, lest it should be forgotten. The emperor's palace was the most beautiful thing in the world; it was made entirely of the finest porcelain, very costly, but at the same time so fragile that it could only be touched with the very greatest care. There were the

most extraordinary flowers to be seen in the garden; the most beautiful ones had little silver bells tied to them, which tinkled perpetually, so that one should not pass the flowers without looking at them. Every little detail in the garden had been most carefully thought out, and it was so big, that even the gardener himself did not know where it ended. If one went on walking, one came to beautiful woods with lofty trees and deep lakes. The wood extended to the sea, which was deep and blue, deep enough for large ships to sail up right under the branches of the trees. Among these trees lived a nightingale, which sang so deliciously, that even the poor fisherman who had plenty of other things to do, lay still to listen to it, when he was out at night drawing in his nets. "Heavens, how beautiful it is!" he said, but then he had to attend to his business and forgot it. The next night when he heard it again he would again exclaim, "Heavens, how beautiful it is!"

Travellers came to the emperor's capital, from every country in the world; they admired everything very much, especially the palace and the gardens, but when they heard the nightingale they all said, "This is better than anything!"

When they got home they described it, and the learned ones wrote many books about the town, the palace and the garden, but nobody forgot the nightingale, it was always put above everything else. Those among them who were poets, wrote the most beautiful poems, all about the nightingale in the

woods by the deep blue sea. These books went all over the world, and in course of time, some of them reached the emperor. He sat in his golden chair reading and reading, and nodding his head, well pleased to hear such beautiful descriptions of the town, the palace and the garden. "But the nightingale is the best of all," he read.

"What is this?" said the emperor. "The nightingale? Why, I know nothing about it. Is there such a bird in my kingdom, and in my own garden into the bargain, and I have never heard of it? Imagine my having to discover this from a book!"

Then he called his gentleman-in-waiting, who was so grand that when anyone of a lower rank dared to speak to him, or to ask him a question, he would only answer "Pf," which means nothing at all.

"There is said to be a very wonderful bird called a nightingale here," said the emperor. "They say that it is better than anything else in all my great kingdom! Why have I never been told anything about it?"

"I have never heard it mentioned," said the gentleman-in-waiting. "It has never been presented at court."

"I wish it to appear here this evening to sing to me," said the emperor. "The whole world knows what I am possessed of, and I know nothing about it!"

"I have never heard it mentioned before," said the gentleman-in-waiting. "I will seek it, and I will

find it." But where was it to be found? The gentleman-in-waiting ran upstairs and downstairs and in and out of all the rooms and corridors. No one of all those he met had ever heard anything about the nightingale; so the gentleman-in-waiting ran back to the emperor, and said that it must be a myth, invented by the writers of the books. "Your imperial majesty must not believe everything that is written; books are often mere inventions, even if they do not belong to what we call the black art!"

"But the book in which I read it is sent to me by the powerful emperor of Japan, so it can't be untrue. I will hear this nightingale; I insist upon its being here to-night. I extend my most gracious protection to it, and if it is not forthcoming, I will have the whole court trampled upon after supper!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the gentleman-in-waiting, and away he ran again, up and down all the stairs, in and out of all the rooms and corridors; half the court ran with him, for they none of them wished to be trampled on. There was much questioning about this nightingale, which was known to all the outside world, but to no one at court. At last they found a poor little maid in the kitchen. She said, "Oh heavens, the nightingale? I know it very well. Yes, indeed it can sing. Every evening I am allowed to take broken meat to my poor sick mother: she lives down by the shore. On my way back when I am tired, I rest awhile in the wood, and then I hear

the nightingale. Its song brings the tears into my eyes; I feel as if my mother were kissing me!"

"Little kitchen-maid," said the gentleman-in-waiting, "I will procure you a permanent position in the kitchen and permission to see the emperor dining, if you will take us to the nightingale. It is commanded to appear at court to-night."

Then they all went out into the wood where the nightingale usually sang. Half the court was there. As they were going along at their best pace a cow began to bellow.

"Oh!" said a young courtier, "there we have it. What wonderful power for such a little creature! I have certainly heard it before."

"No, those are the cows bellowing; we are a long way yet from the place." Then the frogs began to croak in the marsh.

"Beautiful!" said the Chinese chaplain, "it is just like the tinkling of church bells."

"No, those are the frogs!" said the little kitchen-maid. "But I think we shall soon hear it now!"

Then the nightingale began to sing.

"There it is!" said the little girl. "Listen, listen, there it sits!" and she pointed to a little grey bird up among the branches.

"Is it possible?" said the gentleman-in-waiting. "I should never have thought it was like that. How common it looks! Seeing so many grand people must have frightened all its colours away."

"Little nightingale!" called the kitchen-maid

quite loud, "our gracious emperor wishes you to sing to him!"

"With the greatest pleasure!" said the nightingale, warbling away in the most delightful fashion.

"It is just like crystal bells," said the gentleman-in-waiting. "Look at its little throat, how active it is! It is extraordinary that we have never heard it before! I am sure it will be a great success at court!"

"Shall I sing again to the emperor?" said the nightingale, who thought he was present.

"My precious little nightingale," said the gentleman-in-waiting, "I have the honour to command your attendance at a court festival to-night, where you will charm his gracious majesty the emperor with your fascinating singing."

"It sounds best among the trees," said the nightingale, but it went with them willingly when it heard that the emperor wished it.

The palace had been brightened up for the occasion. The walls and the floors, which were all of china, shone by the light of many thousand golden lamps. The most beautiful flowers, all of the tinkling kind, were arranged in the corridors; there was hurrying to and fro, and a great draught, but this was just what made the bells ring; one's ears were full of the tinkling. In the middle of the large reception room where the emperor sat, a golden rod had been fixed, on which the nightingale was to perch. The whole court was assembled, and the

little kitchen-maid had been permitted to stand behind the door, as she now had the actual title of cook. They were all dressed in their best; everybody's eyes were turned towards the little grey bird at which the emperor was nodding. The nightingale sang delightfully, and the tears came into the emperor's eyes; nay, they rolled down his cheeks, and then the nightingale sang more beautifully than ever; its notes touched all hearts. The emperor was charmed, and said the nightingale should have his gold slipper to wear round its neck. But the nightingale declined with thanks, it had already been sufficiently rewarded.

"I have seen tears in the eyes of the emperor, that is my richest reward. The tears of an emperor have a wonderful power! God knows I am sufficiently recompensed!" and then it again burst into its sweet, heavenly song.

"That is the most delightful coquetting I have ever seen!" said the ladies, and they took some water into their mouths to try and make the same gurgling when anyone spoke to them, thinking so to equal the nightingale. Even the lackeys and the chambermaids announced that they were satisfied, and that is saying a great deal; they are always the most difficult people to please. Yes, indeed, the nightingale had made a sensation. It was to stay at court now, and to have its own cage, as well as liberty to walk out twice a day, and once in the night. It always had twelve footmen with each one

holding a ribbon which was tied round its leg. There was not much pleasure in an outing of that sort.

The whole town talked about the marvellous bird, and if two people met, one said to the other " Night," and the other answered " Gale," and then they sighed, perfectly understanding each other. Eleven cheesemongers' children were called after it, but they had not got a voice among them.

One day a large parcel came for the emperor; outside was written the word " Nightingale."

" Here we have another book about this celebrated bird," said the emperor. But it was no book, it was a little work of art in a box, an artificial nightingale, exactly like the living one, but it was studded all over with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires.

When the bird was wound up, it could sing one of the songs the real one sang, and it wagged its tail which glittered with silver and gold. A ribbon was tied round its neck on which was written, " The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is very poor, compared to the Emperor of China's."

Everybody said, " Oh, how beautiful! " And the person who brought the artificial bird immediately received the title of Imperial Nightingale-Carrier in Chief.

" Now, they must sing together; what a duet that will be!"

Then they had to sing together, but they did not get on very well, for the real nightingale sang in its

own way, and the artificial one could only sing waltzes.

"There is no fault in that," said the music master; "it is perfectly in time and correct in every way!"

Then the artificial bird had to sing alone. It was just as great a success as the real one, and then it was so much prettier to look at; it glittered like bracelets and breast-pins.

It sang the same tune three and thirty times over, and yet it was not tired; people would willingly have heard it from the beginning again, but the emperor said that the real one must have a turn now—but where was it? No one had noticed that it had flown out of the open window, back to its own green woods.

"But what is the meaning of this?" said the emperor.

All the courtiers railed at it, and said it was a most ungrateful bird.

"We have got the best bird though," said they, and then the artificial bird had to sing again, and this was the thirty-fourth time that they heard the same tune, but they did not know it thoroughly even yet, because it was so difficult.

The music master praised the bird tremendously, and insisted that it was much better than the real nightingale, not only as regarded the outside with all the diamonds, but the inside too.

"Because, you see, my ladies and gentlemen, and the emperor before all, in the real nightingale you

never know what you will hear, but in the artificial one everything is decided beforehand! So it is, and so it must remain, it can't be otherwise. You can account for things, you can open it and show the human ingenuity in arranging the waltzes, how they go, and how one note follows upon another!"

"Those are exactly my opinions," they all said, and the music master got leave to show the bird to the public next Sunday. They were also to hear it sing, said the emperor. So they heard it, and all became as enthusiastic over it, as if they had drunk themselves merry on tea, because that is a thoroughly Chinese habit.

Then they all said "Oh," and stuck their fore-fingers in the air and nodded their heads; but the poor fishermen who had heard the real nightingale said, "It sounds very nice, and it is very like the real one, but there is something wanting, we don't know what." The real nightingale was banished from the kingdom.

The artificial bird had its place on a silken cushion, close to the emperor's bed: all the presents it had received of gold and precious jewels were scattered round it. Its title had risen to be "Chief Imperial Singer of the Bed-Chamber," in rank number one, on the left side; for the emperor reckoned that side the important one, where the heart was seated. And even an emperor's heart is on the left side. The music master wrote five and twenty volumes about the artificial bird; the treatise was very long, and

written in all the most difficult Chinese characters. Everybody said they had read and understood it, for otherwise they would have been reckoned stupid, and then their bodies would have been trampled upon.

Things went on in this way for a whole year. The emperor, the court, and all the other Chinamen knew every little gurgle in the song of the artificial bird by heart; but they liked it all the better for this, and they could all join in the song themselves. Even the street boys sang " zizizi " and " cluck, cluck, cluck," and the emperor sang it too.

But one evening when the bird was singing its best, and the emperor was lying in bed listening to it, something gave way inside the bird with a " whizz." Then a spring burst; " whirr " went all the wheels, and the music stopped. The emperor jumped out of bed and sent for his private physicians, but what good could they do? Then they sent for the watchmaker, and after a good deal of talk and examination, he got the works to go again somehow; but he said it would have to be saved as much as possible, because it was so worn out, and he could not renew the works so as to be sure of the tune. This was a great blow! They only dared to let the artificial bird sing once a year—and hardly that; but then the music master made a little speech, using all the most difficult words. He said it was just as good as ever, and his saying it made it so.

Five years now passed, and then a great grief

came upon the nation, for they were all very fond of their emperor, and he was ill and could not live, it was said. A new emperor was already chosen, and people stood about in the street, and asked the gentleman-in-waiting how their emperor was going on.

" Pf," answered he, shaking his head.

The emperor lay pale and cold in his gorgeous bed; the courtiers thought he was dead, and they all went off to pay their respects to their new emperor. The lackeys ran off to talk matters over, and the chambermaids gave a great coffee party. Cloth had been laid down in all the rooms and corridors so as to deaden the sound of footsteps, so it was very, very quiet. But the emperor was not dead yet. He lay stiff and pale in the gorgeous bed with its velvet hangings and heavy golden tassels. There was an open window high above him, and the moon streamed in upon the emperor, and the artificial bird beside him.

The poor emperor could hardly breathe, he seemed to have a weight on his chest; he opened his eyes, and then he saw that it was Death sitting upon his chest, wearing his golden crown. In one hand he held the emperor's golden sword, and in the other his imperial banner. Round about, from among the folds of the velvet hangings, peered many curious faces; some were hideous, others gentle and pleasant. They were all the emperor's good and bad deeds, which now looked him in the face when Death was weighing him down.

"Do you remember that?" whispered one after the other, "do you remember this?" and they told him so many things, that the perspiration poured down his face.

"I never knew that," said the emperor. "Music, music! sound the great Chinese drums!" he cried, "that I may not hear what they are saying." But they went on and on, and Death sat nodding his head, just like a Chinaman, at everything that was said.

"Music, music!" shrieked the emperor. "You precious little golden bird, sing, sing! I have loaded you with precious stones, and even hung my own golden slipper round your neck; sing, I tell you, sing!"

But the bird stood silent; there was nobody to wind it up, so of course it could not go. Death continued to fix the great empty sockets of its eyes upon him, and all was silent, so terribly silent.

Suddenly, close to the window, there was a burst of lovely song; it was the living nightingale, perched on a branch outside. It had heard of the emperor's need, and had come to bring comfort and hope to him. As it sang, the faces round became fainter and fainter, and the blood coursed with fresh vigour in the emperor's veins and through his feeble limbs. Even Death himself listened to the song and said, "Go on, little nightingale, go on!"

"Yes, if you give me the gorgeous golden sword; yes, if you give me the imperial banner; yes, if you give me the emperor's crown."

And Death gave back each of these treasures for a song, and the nightingale went on singing. It sang about the quiet churchyard, when the roses bloom, where the elder flower scents the air, and where the fresh grass is ever moistened anew by the tears of the mourner. This song brought to Death a longing for his own garden, and, like a cold grey mist, he passed out of the window.

"Thanks, thanks!" said the emperor; "you heavenly little bird, I know you! I banished you from my kingdom, and yet you have charmed the evil visions away from my bed by your song, and even Death away from my heart! How can I ever repay you?"

"You have rewarded me," said the nightingale. "I brought the tears to your eyes, the very first time I ever sang to you, and I shall never forget it! Those are the jewels which gladden the heart of a singer;—but sleep now, and wake up fresh and strong! I will sing to you!"

Then it sang again, and the emperor fell into a sweet refreshing sleep. The sun shone in at his window, when he woke refreshed and well; none of his attendants had yet come back to him, for they thought he was dead, but the nightingale still sat there singing.

"You must always stay with me!" said the emperor. "You shall only sing when you like, and I will break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces!"

"Don't do that!" said the nightingale, "it did

all the good it could! keep it as you have always done! I can't build my nest and live in this palace, but let me come whenever I like; then I will sit on the branch in the evening, and sing to you. I will sing to cheer you and to make you thoughtful too; I will sing to you of the happy ones, and of those that suffer, too. I will sing about the good and the evil which are kept hidden from you. The little singing bird flies far and wide, to the poor fisherman, and the peasant's home, to numbers who are far from you and your court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet there is an odour of sanctity round the crown too!—I will come, and I will sing to you!—But you must promise me one thing!"——

"Everything!" said the emperor, who stood there in his imperial robes which he had just put on, and he held the sword, heavy with gold, upon his heart.

"One thing I ask you! Tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything; it will be better so!"

Then the nightingale flew away. The attendants came in to see after their dead emperor, and there he stood, bidding them "Good-morning!"

OLÉ LUKÖIÉ, THE DUSTMAN

THERE is nobody in all the world who can tell so many stories as Olé Luköié! And such stories as he can tell!

When night is drawing on, and the children are sitting round the table as good as possible or on their little footstools, in walks Olé Shut-eyes. He comes so quietly up the stairs without his shoes, and opens the door so softly, that nobody hears him; and, puff! he sends a shower of milk into their eyes in such fine spray as to be invisible; but they can't keep their eyes open after it, and so they never see him. He steals behind them and breathes upon their necks, making their heads as heavy as lead; but he never hurts them; he does it all from kindness to the children. He only wants them to be quiet, and the best way to make them quiet is to have them in bed; when they are settled there, he can tell them his stories.

Then as soon as the children are asleep, Olé Luköié seats himself upon their beds. He is well dressed; his clothes are all of silk, but it is impossible to say what colour they are, for it shimmers green, red and blue every time he turns. He has an umbrella under each arm; one with pictures on it, and this he holds over the good children, and then they dream the most

delightful stories all night long. The other umbrella has no pictures on it, and he holds this one over the children who have been naughty, and then they sleep heavily till the morning and have no dreams at all.

I am now going to tell you about a little boy to whom Olé Luköié went every night for a whole week. His name was Hialmar. There are just seven stories, because there are seven days in a week.

MONDAY

"Now, just listen!" said Olé Luköié, in the evening, when he had got Hialmar to bed. "First I will smarten things up a bit," and then all the plants in pots became big trees, with their branches stretching right up to the ceiling and along the walls, so that the room looked like a delightful arbour. The branches were covered with flowers, and the flowers were more beautiful than roses; they had the most delightful scent, and, if you tried to eat them, were more delicious than the very nicest jam. The fruit shone like gold, and then there were buns bursting with plums; they were splendid!

All at once the most miserable grumbles came from the table-drawer where Hialmar's schoolbooks were kept.

"What is that now?" said Olé Luköié, going along and opening the drawer.

It was the slate groaning and writhing because there was a wrong figure in the sum set on it, and it was ready to fall to pieces.

The pencil was hopping and skipping at the end of its piece of string, just as if it had been a little dog which would like to try and do the sum, but it couldn't! Then there was Hialmar's copybook clamouring away inside its covers most pitifully. There was a row of capital letters down each side on every leaf, each with a little one beside it; then beside them letters which imagined that they looked like them, but these were written by Hialmar. They looked almost as if they had tumbled over the line on which they ought to have been standing upright.

"See, this is how you ought to hold yourselves!" said the headlines, "so,—to one side with a brisk flourish!"

"Oh, we should like nothing better," said Hialmar's letters, "but we can't, we are so crooked!"

"Then you shall have a dose of medicine," said Olé Luköié.

"Oh, no!" they cried, and then they stood up as stiffly as possible.

"Well now we can't tell any stories!" said Olé Luköié. "I must drill them! One, two! One two!" and then he drilled the letters, and they stood up stiffer than any headlines could stand. But when Olé Luköié went away and Hialmar woke up in the morning, they were as crooked as ever.

TUESDAY

As soon as Hialmar was in bed, Olé Luköié touched all the furniture in the room with his little wooden wand, and everything began to talk. They all talked about themselves, except the spittoon, which was silent and much annoyed that they were all so vain, as only to talk about themselves, and to pay no attention to him, standing so modestly in the corner and allowing himself to be spat upon. There was a big picture in a gilt frame hanging over the chest of drawers; it was a landscape in which one saw tall, old trees, flowers growing in the grass, and a great piece of water, with a river flowing from it round behind a wood, past many castles and away to the open sea.

Olé Luköié touched the picture with his wand, and the birds in it began to sing, the branches of the trees moved and the clouds scudded along; you could see their shadows passing over the landscape.

Now Olé Luköié lifted little Hialmar up close to the frame, and Hialmar put his leg right into the picture among the long grass, and there he stood; the sun shone down upon him through the branches of the trees. He ran to the water and got into a little boat which lay there; it was painted red and white, and the sails shone like silver. Six swans, all with golden crowns round their necks, and a shining blue star upon their heads, drew the boat past the dark

green woods, where the trees told stories about robbers and witches; and the flowers told other stories about the pretty little elves, and all that the butterflies had told them.

Beautiful fish with gold and silver scales swam after the boat; every now and then they sprang out of the water and back again with a splash. Red and blue birds, large and small, flew in two long lines behind them; the gnats buzzed, and the cockchafers boomed; they all wanted to go with Hialmar, and each of them had a story to tell.

That was a sailing trip indeed! Now the woods were thick and dark, now they were like beautiful gardens full of sunshine and flowers, and among them were castles of glass and marble. Princesses stood upon the balconies, and they were all little girls whom Hialmar knew and used to play with.

They stretched out their hands, each one holding the most beautiful sugar-pig which any cake-woman could sell. Hialmar took hold of one end of the pig as they sailed by, and the princess held the other tight, and each had a share, she the smaller and Hialmar the bigger! Little princes stood sentry by each castle; they saluted with golden swords, and showered down sugar-plums and tin soldiers; they were princes indeed.

Now he sailed through a wood, now through great halls, or right through a town; he passed through the one where his nurse lived, she who used to carry him about when he was quite a little boy, and who

was so fond of him. She nodded and waved her hand to him, and sang a pretty little song which she had written herself and sent to Hialmar:

I dream of thee for many an hour,
Hialmar, my own, my sweeting;
My kisses once fell like a shower,
Thy brow and red cheeks greeting.

Mine ear thy first formed word addressed,
Thy last must be in parting;
May you on earth by Heaven be blessed,
Angel, from Heavenward darting!

All the birds sang too, the flowers danced upon their stalks, and the old trees nodded, just as if Olé Luköié were telling them stories.

WEDNESDAY

How the rain was pouring down outside! Hialmar could even hear it in his sleep, and when Olé Luköié opened the window, the water stood right up to the sill; it was a regular lake, and a beautiful ship lay close up to the house.

"Will you sail with me, little Hialmar?" said Olé Luköié; "if you will, you can go to distant countries to-night, and be back here again in the morning!"

Then all at once Hialmar found himself in his best Sunday clothes, on board the beautiful ship; it was heavenly weather, and they sailed through the streets, past the church, till they reached a wild open

sea. They sailed so far that there was no more land to be seen. They saw a flock of storks leaving home on their way to the warm countries, flying in a line, one behind the other; they had already flown a long, long way. One of them was so tired, that his wings could hardly carry him any further; he was the last one in the row, and soon he was a long way behind. At last he sank, with outspread wings, lower and lower; he flapped his wings feebly for a few strokes, but it was no use. Now he touched the rigging of the ship with his feet, and slid down the sail with a flop on to the deck.

Then the cabin-boy picked him up and put him into the hen-house, with the chickens, and ducks and turkeys; the poor stork stood among them looking quite depressed.

"What a creature!" said all the hens. The turkey-cock puffed himself up as big as he could, and asked who he was; and the ducks waddled backwards pushing against each other, saying "Quack, quack!"

Then the stork told them about sunny Africa, and the pyramids, and the ostrich running across the deserts like a wild horse; but the ducks did not understand him, and they pushed each other and said, "Are we agreed that he is an idiot?"

"Yes, indeed, he's an idiot," said the turkey-cock with a gobble. Then the stork became quite silent, and thought about his beloved Africa.

"Nice thin legs you've got!" said the turkey-cock. "How much a yard?"

"Quack, quack, quack!" grinned all the ducks, but the stork appeared not to hear them.

"You're quite at liberty to laugh too," said the turkey-cock to him; "it was a very witty remark, or perhaps it was too low for you, gobble, gobble. He's not many-sided," he said to the others; "it's good enough to amuse us!" Then all the hens clucked and the ducks quacked; it was tremendous, the amusement they got out of it.

But Hialmar went along to the hen-house, opened the door and called the stork, and it hopped out on to the deck to him. It was rested now, and it seemed to nod to Hialmar to thank him; thereupon it spread its wings and flew away to the warm countries. But the hens clucked, the ducks quacked, and the turkey-cock's head got as red as fire.

"To-morrow we'll make you into soup," said Hialmar, and then he woke up and found himself lying in his own little bed. That was an extraordinary journey Olé Luköié had taken him.

THURSDAY

"I'll tell you what!" said Olé Luköié; "don't be frightened, and I will show you a little mouse." And he stretched out his hand with the tiny little animal in it. "It has come to invite you to a wedding. There are two little mice who intend to enter the wedded state to-night. They live under the floor of

your mother's larder, which they say is a most delightful residence."

"But how can I get through a little mouse-hole in the floor?" said Hialmar.

"Leave that to me," said Olé Luköié; "I'll soon make you small enough!"

Then he touched Hialmar with his wand, and he quickly grew smaller and smaller; at last he was not as tall as one's finger.

"Now you may borrow the tin soldier's clothes; I think they'll just fit you, and it looks so smart to have on a uniform when one's in company."

"Yes indeed!" said Hialmar, and in a moment he was dressed like the grandest tin soldier.

"Be so good as to take a seat in your mother's thimble," said the little mouse, "and I shall have the honour of drawing you!"

"Heavens! are you going to take that trouble yourself, young lady?" said Hialmar, and off they drove to the mouse's wedding.

First they went down under the floor into a long passage, which was just high enough for them to drive through, and the whole passage was lighted up with touch-wood.

"Isn't there a delicious smell here?" said the mouse who was drawing him. "The whole passage has been smeared over with bacon fat! Nothing could be nicer."

Then they came to the bridal hall, where all the little lady-mice stood on the right whispering and

giggling, as if they were making fun of each other, and on the left stood all the gentlemen-mice stroking their whiskers with their paws. The bridal pair stood in the middle of the room, in the hollow rind of a cheese, kissing each other most energetically before all the other people; but then they were engaged, you know, and just about to be married.

More and more visitors poured in; the mice were almost crushing each other to death, and the bridal pair had taken their place in the doorway, so that one could neither get in nor out. The whole room, like the passage, was smeared with bacon fat; there were no other refreshments, but for dessert a pea was produced, in which one of the little mice of the family had bitten the name of the bridal pair; that is to say, the first letter of it, and this was something quite extraordinary.

All the mice said it was a delightful wedding, and the conversation most entertaining.

And then Hialmar drove home again; he had been in very grand company, but in order to get there he had been obliged to shrink wonderfully, to make himself small enough to get into the uniform of a tin soldier.

FRIDAY

"It is astounding what a number of grown-up people would like to get hold of me!" said Olé Luköié, "especially those with a bad conscience. 'Good

little Olé,' they say to me, 'we can't close our eyes, and there we lie all night with all our bad deeds staring us in the face. They are like naughty elfins; they come and sit on our beds and squirt hot water over us. Won't you come and chase them away so that we may have a good sleep?' and then they sigh deeply. 'We will gladly pay you, Olé; good-night. You will find the money on the window-sill.' But I don't do it for money!" said Olé Luköié.

"What are we going to do to-night?" asked Hialmar.

"Well, I don't know whether you would like to go to a wedding again to-night; it's a different kind from yesterday's. Your sister's big doll, the one which looks like a man and is called Herman, is to be married to Bertha; besides which it is her birthday, so there will be no end of presents."

"Oh, I know all about that; whenever the dolls want new clothes my sister lets them have a birthday or a wedding. It has happened hundreds of times!"

"Yes, but to-night it's the hundred and first wedding, and the hundred and first is the end of all things, so that's why this one will be so grand. Just look!"

Hialmar looked along at the table; there was the little pasteboard house with lights in the windows, and all the tin soldiers presenting arms outside. The bridal pair sat upon the floor, leaning against the leg of the table; they were very thoughtful, and they had reason to be. Olé Luköié, dressed in grand-

mother's black skirt, married them; when the ceremony was over, all the furniture in the room joined in singing the following pretty song which had been written by the pencil; it went to the tune of the tattoo:

> Our song shall swing like the wind, like the wind,
> Till the bridal pair are enshrin'd, are enshrin'd,
> And they curtsey both like a stick, do you mind?
> For they're wood inside with kid for a rind.
> Hurrah! hurrah! wood and skin well combin'd,
> We'll sing it aloud to the rain and the wind!

Then the presents were given, but they had declined any eatables: love was enough for them without anything else.

"Shall we go into the country or travel abroad?" asked the bridegroom, and then they consulted the swallow which had travelled so much, and the old mother-hen which had reared five broods of chickens. The swallow told them all about the delightful warm countries where the grapes hung in luscious clusters, and where the air was so mild, and the colours on the mountains were such as were not to be found elsewhere.

"But they haven't got our green cabbage," said the hen. "I was in the country all one summer with my chicks; there was a gravel pit that we scratched in all day, and then we got admission to a garden where the cabbage grew! Oh, how green it was! I can't imagine anything more beautiful."

"But one cabbage is just like another," said the

swallow, "and then there's so much bad weather here!"

"Oh, we're used to that," said the hen.

"But it's so cold, it freezes."

"That's good for the cabbage," said the hen. "Besides, sometimes it is warm enough. Four years ago didn't we have a summer with tremendous heat; for five weeks one could hardly breathe! And then we don't have all the poisonous creatures they have abroad, and there are no robbers. Anyone who doesn't think our own country the best, must be a fool! He doesn't deserve to live here." And the hen began to cry. "I've had my journeys too; I once travelled twelve miles in a barrel, and there's no pleasure in travelling."

"Ah, the hen is a wise woman!" said Bertha the doll. "I don't like travelling among mountains either, for first you go up and then you go down! No, we will move out by the gravel pit and take our walks in the cabbage garden."

And that was the end of it.

SATURDAY

"Are we going to have some stories?" asked little Hialmar, as soon as Olé Lukõié had got him to bed.

"We haven't time for any to-night," said Olé, as he opened his prettiest umbrella. "Just look at

these Chinese!" The whole umbrella looked exactly like a big Chinese bowl, with blue trees all over it, and arched bridges on which stood little people nodding their heads. "We must have the whole world polished up for to-morrow," said Olé; "it is a holiday, for it is Sunday. I must go up into the church tower to see if the little church brownies are polishing the bells so that they may sound well. I must go into the fields to see if the wind has blown the dust off the grass and leaves. My biggest piece of work is to get down all the stars to polish them; I take them in my apron; but first I have to number each one, and the holes they belong to have to be numbered too, so that they may go back into their proper places, or they wouldn't stick, and then we should be having too many falling stars; one after the other would drop out."

"Now, I say, Mr. Luköié," said one of the old portraits hanging on the wall, "I am Hialmar's great-grandfather; I am much obliged to you for telling him stories, but you mustn't puzzle his brains. The stars can't be taken down to be polished! The stars are planets just like our own earth, and that's the best of them!"

"Much obliged to you, old great-grandfather," said Olé Luköié. "My best thanks to you; you are the head of the family; you are an antiquity, but I am older than you! I am an old heathen; the Greeks and Romans call me the Dream-god! I have my footing in the grandest houses; I can get on

both with big and little! You may tell the stories yourself!" And then Olé Luköié went away and took his umbrella with him.

"I suppose one mayn't give an opinion now!" said the old portrait.

And then Hialmar woke.

SUNDAY

"Good evening," said Olé Luköié, and Hialmar nodded; and then he jumped up and turned great-grandfather's portrait with its face to the wall, so that it should not talk as it did last time.

"Now you must tell me some stories about the 'Five green peas which lived in a pease-pod,' and about the 'Cock paying his addresses to the hen,' and about the 'Darning-needle,' which was so fine that it fancied it was an ordinary needle!"

"You may have too much of a good thing," said Olé Luköié; "I would rather show you something you know! I will show you my brother; he is also called Olé Luköié, but he never comes more than once to anybody, and when he comes he takes them away with him on his horse, and tells them stories. He only knows two; one which is so beautiful that nobody on earth can imagine it, and one which is too horrible to be described!" And then Olé lifted little Hialmar up to the window, and said, "Now you can see my brother, the other Olé Luköié! He

is also called Death; you see he doesn't look at all bad, as he sometimes does in pictures, all bones and joints! No, he has a silver embroidered border round his coat; it is a Hussar's uniform, and a black velvet cloak streams out behind over his horse's back. See how they are galloping."

And Hialmar saw how Olé Luköié rode off, taking both old and young with him on his horse. He put some of them before him and some behind, but he always asked first, "What character have you in your mark book?" They all said, "Good." "Let me see myself," said he, and then they had to show him the book. All those who had "Very good" or "Excellent" against their names were put up in front of him, and were told the most delightful stories; but those who had only "Pretty good" or "Tolerable," had to sit behind him, and were told horrible stories. They shivered, and cried, and tried to get off the horse, but they couldn't do that, because they grew fast to it at once.

"But Death is a beautiful Olé Luköié," said Hialmar. "I am not a bit afraid of him!"

"Nor need you be," said Olé Luköié; "if only you take care to have a good character in your book."

"Ah, now, that's instructive!" mumbled great-grandfather's portrait. "It's some good after all to speak one's mind!" and he was quite pleased.

Now this is the story about Olé Luköié! To-night he can tell you some more himself.

THE ELF-HILL

SOME lizards were nimbly running in and out of the clefts in an old tree. They understood each other very well, for they all spoke lizard language.

"What a rumbling and grumbling is going on inside the old Elf-hill," said one of the lizards. "I have not closed my eyes for the last two nights for the noise. I might just as well be having toothache, for all the sleep I get!"

"There is something going on inside," said the other lizard. "They propped up the top of the hill on four red posts till cockcrow this morning, to air it out thoroughly; and the elf maidens had been learning some new dancing steps, which they are always practising. There certainly must be something going on."

"Yes, I was talking to an earthworm of my acquaintance about it," said the third lizard. "He came straight up out of the hill, where he had been boring into the earth for days and nights. He had heard a good deal, for the miserable creature can't see, but it can feel its way, and plays the part of eavesdropper to perfection. They are expecting visitors in the Elf-hill, grand visitors; but who they are the earthworm refused to say or perhaps he did not know. All the will-o'-the-wisps are ordered for a procession of torches, as it is called; and the

silver and gold plate, of which there is any amount in the hill, is all being polished up and put out in the moonlight."

"Whoever can the strangers be?" said all the lizards together.

"What on earth is happening? Hark! what a humming and buzzing!"

At this moment the Elf-hill opened, and an elderly elf-maiden tripped out. She was hollow behind, but otherwise quite attractively dressed. She was the old elf-king's housekeeper, and a distant relative. She wore an amber heart upon her forehead. She moved her legs at a great pace, trip, trip. Good heavens! how fast she tripped over the ground; she went right down to the night-jar in the swamp.

"You are invited to the Elf-hill for to-night," said she to him. "But will you be so kind as to charge yourself with the other invitations. You must make yourself useful in other ways, as you don't keep house yourself. We are going to have some very distinguished visitors, goblins, who always have something to say, and so the old elf-king means to show what he can do."

"Who is to be invited?" asked the night-jar.

"Well, everybody may come to the big ball, even human beings, if they can only talk in their sleep, or do something else after our fashion. But the choice is to be strictly limited for the grand feast. We will only have the most distinguished people. I have had a battle with the elf-king about it; because

I hold that we mustn't even include ghosts. The merman and his daughters must be invited first. I don't suppose they care much about coming on dry land, but I shall see that they each have a wet stone to sit on, or something better; so I expect they won't decline this time. All the old demons of the first-class, with tails; the River-god, and the wood-sprites. And then I don't think we can pass over the Grave-pig, the Night-horse, and the Church-grim, although they belong to the clergy, who are not of our people; but that is merely on account of their office, and they are closely connected with us, and visit us very frequently."

"Croak!" said the night-jar, and he flew off to issue the invitations.

The elf-maidens had already begun to dance, and they danced a scarf dance, with scarves woven of mist and moonshine; these have a lovely effect to those who care for that kind of thing. The great hall in the middle of the Elf-hill had been thoroughly polished up for the occasion. The floor was washed with moonshine, and the walls were rubbed over with witches' fat, and this made them shine with many colours, like a tulip petal. The kitchen was full of frogs on spits, stuffed snake skins, and salads of toadstool spawn, mouse snouts and hemlock. Then there was beer brewed by the marsh witch, and sparkling salt-petre wine from the vaults. Everything of the best, and rusty nails and church window panes among the kickshaws.

The old elf-king had his golden crown polished with pounded slate-pencil; ay, and it was a head-boy's slate-pencil too, and they are not so easy to get. They hung up fresh curtains in the bedroom, and fixed them with the slime of snails. Yes, indeed, there was a humming and a buzzing.

"Now we will fumigate with horsehair and pig's bristles, and then I can do no more!" said the old elf-servant.

"Dear father!" said the youngest of the daughters, "are you not going to tell me who these grand strangers are?"

"Well, well," he said, "I suppose I must tell you now. Two of my daughters must prepare themselves to be married—two will certainly make marriages. The old Trold chieftain from Norway, that lives on the Dovrefield, among his many rock castles and fastnesses and gold works, which are better than you would expect, is coming down here with his two sons. They are coming to look for wives. The old Trold is a regular honest Norwegian veteran, straightforward and merry. I used to know him in the olden days, when we drank to our good fellowship. He came here to fetch a wife, but she is dead now. She was a daughter of the king of the chalk cliffs at Möen. As the saying is, "He took his wife on the chalk," viz., bought her on tick. I am quite anxious to see the old fellow. The sons, they say, are a pair of overgrown, ill-mannered cubs; but perhaps they are not so bad; I daresay they will

improve as they grow older. See if you can't lick them into shape a bit."

"And when do they come?" asked one of the daughters.

"That depends upon wind and weather," said the elf-king. "They travel economically, and they will take their chance of a ship. I wanted them to come round by Sweden, but the old fellow can't bring himself to that yet. He doesn't march with the times, but I don't hold with that!"

At this moment two will-o'-the-wisps came hopping along, one faster than the other, so of course one arrived before the other.

"They are coming, they are coming!" they cried.

"Give me my crown, and let me stand in the moonlight," said the elf-king.

The daughters raised their scarves and curtseyed to the ground.

There stood the Trold chieftain from the Dovrefield; he wore a crown of hardened icicles and polished fir cones, and besides this, he had on a bearskin coat and snow-shoes. His sons, on the other hand, had bare necks and wore no braces, because they were strong men.

"Is that a hill?" asked the youngest of the brothers, pointing to the Elf-hill. "We should call it a hole in Norway."

"Lads!" cried the old man, "holes go inwards, hills go upwards! Haven't you got eyes in your heads?"

The only thing that astonished them, they said, was that they understood the language without any trouble.

"Don't make fools of yourselves," said the old man; "one might think you were only half baked."

Then they went into the Elf-hill, where the company was of the grandest, although they had been got together in such a hurry; you might almost say they had been blown together. It was all charming, and arranged to suit everyone's taste. The merman and his daughters sat at table in great tubs of water, and said it was just like being at home. Everybody had excellent table manners, except the two young Norwegian Trolds; they put their feet up on the table—but then they thought anything they did was right.

"Take your feet out of the way of the dishes," said the old Trold, and they obeyed him, but not at once. They tickled the ladies they took in to dinner with fir cones out of their pockets; then they pulled off their boots, so as to be quite comfortable, and handed the boots to the ladies to hold. Their father, the old Trold chieftain, was very different; he told no end of splendid stories about the proud Norwegian mountains, and the waterfalls dashing down in white foam with a roar like thunder. He told them about the salmon leaping up against the rushing water, when the nixies played their golden harps. Then he went on to tell them about the sparkling winter nights when the sledge bells rang and the

lads flew over the ice with blazing lights; the ice which was so transparent that you could see the startled fish darting away under your feet. Yes, indeed, he could tell stories; you could see and hear the things he described; the sawmills going, the men and maids singing their songs and dancing the merry Halling dance. Huzza! All at once the old Trold gave the elf housekeeper a smacking kiss; such a kiss it was, and yet they were not a bit related. Then the elf-maidens had to dance, first plain dancing, and then step dancing, and it was most becoming to them. Then came a fancy dance.

Preserve us, how nimble they were on their legs; you couldn't tell where they began, or where they ended, you couldn't tell which were arms and which were legs, they were all mixed up together like shavings in a saw-pit. They twirled round and round so often that it made the Night-horse feel quite giddy and unwell, and he had to leave the table.

"Prrrrr!" said the old Trold. "There is some life in those legs, but what else can they do besides dancing and pointing their toes and all those whirligigs?"

"We will soon show you!" said the elf-king, and he called out his youngest daughter; she was thin and transparent as moonshine, and was the most ethereal of all the daughters. She put a little white stick in her mouth and vanished instantly; this was her accomplishment.

But the Trold said he did not like that accomplishment in a wife, nor did he think his boys would appreciate it. The second one could walk by her own side as if she had a shadow, and no elves have shadows.

The third was quite different; she had studied in the marsh witches' brewery, and understood larding alder stumps with glow-worms.

"She will be a good housewife," said the Trold, and then he saluted her with his eyes instead of drinking her health, for he did not want to drink too much.

Now came the turn of the fourth; she had a big golden harp to play, and when she touched the first string everybody lifted up their left legs (for all the elfin folk are left legged). But when she touched the second string everybody had to do what she wished.

"She is a dangerous woman!" said the Trold, but both his sons left the hill, for they were tired of it all.

"And what can the next daughter do?" asked the old Trold.

"I have learnt to like the Norwegians," she said, "and I shall never marry unless I can go to Norway!"

But the smallest of the sisters whispered to the Trold, "That is only because she once heard a song which said that when the world came to an end the rocks of Norway would still stand, and that is why

she wants to go there, she is so afraid of being exterminated."

"Ho, ho!" said the Trold, "so that slipped out. But what can the seventh do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the elf-king, for he could reckon; but she would not come forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," she said. "Nobody cares for me, and I have enough to do in making my winding-sheet."

Now came the seventh and last; what could she do? Well, she could tell stories, as many as ever she liked.

"Here are my five fingers," said the old Trold; "tell me a story for each one."

The elf-maiden took hold of his wrist, and he chuckled and laughed, till he nearly choked. When she came to the fourth finger, which had a gold ring on it, as if it knew there was to be a betrothal, the Trold said, "Hold fast what you have got, the hand is yours; I will have you for a wife myself!" The elf-maiden said that the stories about Guldbrand, the fourth finger, and little Peter Playman, the fifth, had not yet been told.

"Never mind, keep those till winter. Then you shall tell us about the fir, and the birch, and the fairy gifts, and the tingling frost. You shall have every opportunity of telling us stories; nobody up there does it yet. We will sit in the Stone Hall, where the pine logs blaze, and drink mead out of

the golden horns of the old Norwegian kings. The river god gave me a couple. When we sit there the mountain sprite comes to pay us a visit, and he will sing you the songs of the Sæter girls. The salmon will leap in the waterfalls, and beat against the stone wall, but it won't get in. Ah, you may believe me when I say that we lead a merry life there in good old Norway. But where are the lads?"

Yes, where were the lads? They were running about the fields, blowing out the will-o'-the-wisps, who came so willingly for the torchlight procession.

"Why do you gad about out there?" said the Trold. "I have taken a mother for you, now you can come and take one of the aunts."

But the lads said they would rather make a speech, and drink toasts; they had no wish to marry. Then they made their speeches, and drank toasts and tipped their glasses up to show that they had emptied them. After that they pulled off their coats and went to sleep on the table, to show that they were quite at home. But the old Trold danced round and round the room with his young bride, and exchanged boots with her, which was grander than exchanging rings.

"There is the cock crowing!" said the old housekeeper. "Now we must shut the shutters, so that the sun may not burn us up."

Then the hill closed up. But the lizards went on running up and down the clefts of the tree; and

they said to each other: "Ah, how much I liked the old Trold."

"I liked the boys better," said the earthworm; but then it couldn't see, poor, miserable creature that it was.

THE WILD SWANS

FAR away, where the swallows take refuge in winter, lived a king who had eleven sons and one daughter, Elise. The eleven brothers—they were all princes—used to go to school with stars on their breasts and swords at their sides. They wrote upon golden slates with diamond pencils, and could read just as well without a book as with one, so there was no mistake about their being real princes. Their sister Elise sat upon a little footstool of looking-glass, and she had a picture-book which had cost the half of a kingdom. Oh, these children were very happy; but it was not to last thus for ever.

Their father, who was king over all the land, married a wicked queen who was not at all kind to the poor children; they found that out on the first day. All was festive at the castle, but when the children wanted to play at having company, instead of having as many cakes and baked apples as ever they wanted, she would only let them have some sand in a tea-cup, and said they must make believe.

In the following week she sent little Elise into the country to board with some peasants, and it did not take her long to make the king believe so many bad things about the boys, that he cared no more about them.

"Fly out into the world and look after yourselves," said the wicked queen. "You shall fly about like birds without voices."

But she could not make things as bad for them as she would have liked; they turned into eleven beautiful wild swans. They flew out of the palace window with a weird scream, right across the park and the woods.

It was very early in the morning when they came to the place where their sister Elise was sleeping in the peasant's house. They hovered over the roof of the house, turning and twisting their long necks, and flapping their wings; but no one either heard or saw them. They had to fly away again, and they soared up towards the clouds, far out into the wide world, and they settled in a big, dark wood, which stretched down to the shore.

Poor little Elise stood in the peasant's room, playing with a green leaf, for she had no other toys. She made a little hole in it, which she looked through at the sun, and it seemed to her as if she saw her brothers' bright eyes. Every time the warm sunbeams shone upon her cheek, it reminded her of their kisses. One day passed just like another. When the wind whistled through the rose-hedges

outside the house, it whispered to the roses, "Who can be prettier than you are?" But the roses shook their heads and answered, "Elise!" And when the old woman sat in the doorway reading her Psalms, the wind turned over the leaves and said to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" "Elise!" answered the book. Both the roses and the book of Psalms only spoke the truth.

She was to go home when she was fifteen, but when the queen saw how pretty she was, she got very angry, and her heart was filled with hatred. She would willingly have turned her into a wild swan too, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do it at once, for the king wanted to see his daughter. The queen always went to the bath in the early morning. It was built of marble and adorned with soft cushions and beautiful carpets.

She took three toads, kissed them, and said to the first, "Sit upon Elise's head when she comes to the bath, so that she may become sluggish like yourself." "Sit upon her forehead," she said to the second, "that she may become ugly like you, and then her father won't know her! Rest upon her heart," she whispered to the third. "Let an evil spirit come over her, which may be a burden to her." Then she put the toads into the clean water, and a green tinge immediately came over it. She called Elise, undressed her, and made her go into the bath; when she ducked under the water, one of the toads got among her hair, the other got on

to her forehead, and the third on to her bosom. But when she stood up three scarlet poppies floated on the water; had not the creatures been poisonous, and kissed by the sorceress, they would have been changed into crimson roses, but yet they became flowers from merely having rested a moment on her head and her heart. She was far too good and innocent for the sorcery to have any power over her. When the wicked queen saw this, she rubbed her over with walnut juice, and smeared her face with some evil-smelling salve. She also matted up her beautiful hair; it would have been impossible to recognise pretty Elise. When her father saw her, he was quite horrified and said that she could not be his daughter. Nobody would have anything to say to her, except the yard dog, and the swallows, and they were only poor dumb animals whose opinion went for nothing.

Poor Elise wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all lost. She crept sadly out of the palace and wandered about all day, over meadows and marshes, and into a big forest. She did not know in the least where she wanted to go, but she felt very sad, and longed for her brothers, who, no doubt, like herself had been driven out of the palace. She made up her mind to go and look for them, but she had only been in the wood for a short time when night fell. She had quite lost her way, so she lay down upon the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and rested her head on a little hillock. It was very

still and the air was mild, hundreds of glow-worms shone around her on the grass and in the marsh like green fire. When she gently moved one of the branches over her head, the little shining insects fell over her like a shower of stars. She dreamt about her brothers all night long. Again they were children playing together: they wrote upon the golden slates with their diamond pencils, and she looked at the picture-book which had cost half a kingdom. But they no longer wrote strokes and noughts upon their slates as they used to do; no, they wrote down all their boldest exploits, and everything that they had seen and experienced. Everything in the picture book was alive; the birds sang, and the people walked out of the book, and spoke to Elise and her brothers. When she turned over a page, they skipped back into their places again, so that there should be no confusion among the pictures.

When she woke the sun was already high; it is true she could not see it very well through the thick branches of the lofty forest trees, but the sunbeams cast a golden shimmer around beyond the forest. There was a fresh, delicious scent of grass and herbs in the air, and the birds were almost ready to perch upon her shoulders. She could hear the splashing of water, for there were many springs around, which all flowed into a pond with a lovely sandy bottom. It was surrounded with thick bushes, but there was one place which the stags had trampled down, and Elise passed through the opening to the water-side. It

was so transparent, that had not the branches been moved by the breeze, she must have thought that they were painted on the bottom, so plainly was every leaf reflected, both those on which the sun played, and those which were in shade.

When she saw her own face she was quite frightened, it was so brown and ugly, but when she wet her little hand and rubbed her eyes and forehead, her white skin shone through again. Then she took off all her clothes and went into the fresh water. A more beautiful royal child than she could not be found in all the world.

When she had put on her clothes again, and plaited her long hair, she went to a sparkling spring and drank some of the water out of the hollow of her hand. Then she wandered farther into the wood, though where she was going she had not the least idea. She thought of her brothers, and she thought of a merciful God who would not forsake her. He let the wild crab-apples grow to feed the hungry. He showed her a tree, the branches of which were bending beneath their weight of fruit. Here she made her midday meal, and, having put props under the branches, she walked on into the thickest part of the forest. It was so quiet that she heard her own footsteps, she heard every little withered leaf which bent under her feet. Not a bird was to be seen, not a ray of sunlight pierced the leafy branches, and the tall trunks were so close together that when she looked before her it seemed as if a thick fence of

heavy beams hemmed her in on every side. The solitude was such as she had never known before.

It was a very dark night, not a single glow-worm sparkled in the marsh; sadly she lay down to sleep, and it seemed to her as if the branches above her parted asunder, and the Saviour looked down upon her with His loving eyes, and little angels' heads peeped out above His head and under His arms.

When she woke in the morning she was not sure if she had dreamt this, or whether it was really true.

She walked a little further, when she met an old woman with a basket full of berries, of which she gave her some. Elise asked if she had seen eleven princes ride through the wood. "No," said the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans, with golden crowns upon their heads, swimming in the stream close by here."

She led Elise a little further to a slope, at the foot of which the stream meandered. The trees on either bank stretched out their rich leafy branches towards each other, and where, from their natural growth, they could not reach each other, they had torn their roots out of the ground, and leant over the water so as to interlace their branches.

Elise said good-bye to the old woman, and walked along by the river till it flowed out into the great open sea.

The beautiful open sea lay before the maiden, but not a sail was to be seen on it, not a single boat. How was she ever to get any further? She looked

at the numberless little pebbles on the beach; they were all worn quite round by the water. Glass, iron, stone, whatever was washed up, had taken their shapes from the water, which yet was much softer than her little hand. "With all its rolling, it is untiring, and everything hard is smoothed down. I will be just as untiring! Thank you for your lesson, you clear rolling waves! Some time, so my heart tells me, you will bear me to my beloved brothers!"

Eleven white swans' feathers were lying on the sea-weed; she picked them up and made a bunch of them. There were still drops of water on them. Whether these were dew or tears no one could tell It was very lonely there by the shore, but she did not feel it, for the sea was ever-changing. There were more changes on it in the course of a few hours than could be seen on an inland fresh-water lake in a year. If a big black cloud arose, it was just as if the sea wanted to say, "I can look black too," and then the wind blew up and the waves showed their white crests. But if the clouds were red and the wind dropped, the sea looked like a rose-leaf, now white, now green. But, however still it was, there was always a little gentle motion just by the shore; the water rose and fell softly like the bosom of a sleeping child.

When the sun was just about to go down, Elise saw eleven wild swans with golden crowns upon their heads flying towards the shore. They flew in a swaying line, one behind the other, like a white

ribbon streamer. Elise climbed up on to the bank and hid behind a bush; the swans settled close by her and flapped their great white wings.

As soon as the sun had sunk beneath the water the swans shed their feathers and became eleven handsome princes; they were Elise's brothers. Although they had altered a good deal, she knew them at once; she felt that they must be her brothers, and she sprang into their arms, calling them by name. They were delighted when they recognised their little sister who had grown so big and beautiful. They laughed and cried, and told each other how wickedly their stepmother had treated them all.

"We brothers," said the eldest, "have to fly about in the guise of swans, as long as the sun is above the horizon. When it goes down we regain our human shapes. So we always have to look out for a resting place near sunset, for should we happen to be flying up among the clouds when the sun goes down, we should be hurled to the depths below. We do not live here; there is another land, just as beautiful as this, beyond the sea; but the way to it is very long and we have to cross the mighty ocean to get to it. There is not a single island on the way where we can spend the night, only one solitary little rock juts up above the water midway. It is only just big enough for us to stand upon close together, and if there is a heavy sea the water splashes over us; yet we thank our God for it. We stay there over night in our human forms, and without it we could

never revisit our beloved Fatherland, for our flight takes two of the longest days in the year. We are only permitted to visit the home of our fathers once a year, and we dare only stay for eleven days. We hover over this big forest from whence we catch a glimpse of the palace where we were born, and where our father lives; beyond it we can see the high church towers where our mother is buried. We fancy that the trees and bushes here are related to us; and the wild horses gallop over the moors, as we used to see them in our childhood. The charcoal burners still sing the old songs we used to dance to when we were children. This is our Fatherland, we are drawn towards it, and here we have found you again, dear little sister! We may stay here two days longer, and then we must fly away again across the ocean, to a lovely country indeed, but it is not our own dear Fatherland! How shall we ever take you with us? we have neither ship nor boat!"

"How can I deliver you?" said their sister, and they went on talking to each other, nearly all night; they only dozed for a few hours.

Elise was awakened in the morning by the rustling of the swans' wings above her; her brothers were again transformed and were wheeling round in great circles, till she lost sight of them in the distance. One of them, the youngest, stayed behind. He laid his head against her bosom, and she caressed it with her fingers. They remained together all day;

towards evening the others came back, and as soon as the sun went down they took their natural forms.

"To-morrow we must fly away, and we dare not come back for a whole year, but we can't leave you like this! Have you courage to go with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you over the forest, so surely our united strength ought to be sufficient to bear you across the ocean."

"Oh yes! take me with you," said Elise.

They spent the whole night in weaving a kind of net of the elastic bark of the willow bound together with tough rushes; they made it both large and strong. Elise lay down upon it, and when the sun rose and the brothers became swans again, they took up the net in their bills and flew high up among the clouds with their precious sister, who was fast asleep. The sunbeams fell straight on to her face, so one of the swans flew over her head so that its broad wings should shade her.

They were far from land when Elise woke; she thought she must still be dreaming, it seemed so strange to be carried through the air so high up above the sea. By her side lay a branch of beautiful ripe berries, and a bundle of savoury roots, which her youngest brother had collected for her, and for which she gave him a grateful smile. She knew it was he who flew above her head shading her from the sun. They were so high up that the first ship they saw looked like a gull floating on the water. A great cloud came up behind them like a mountain,

and Elise saw the shadow of herself on it, and those of the eleven swans looking like giants. It was a more beautiful picture than any she had ever seen before, but as the sun rose higher, the cloud fell behind, and the shadow picture disappeared.

They flew on and on all day like an arrow whizzing through the air, but they went slower than usual, for now they had their sister to carry. A storm came up, and night was drawing on; Elise saw the sun sinking, with terror in her heart, for the solitary rock was nowhere to be seen. The swans seemed to be taking stronger strokes than ever; alas! she was the cause of their not being able to get on faster; as soon as the sun went down they would become men, and they would all be hurled into the sea and drowned. She prayed to God from the bottom of her heart, but still no rock was to be seen! Black clouds gathered, and strong gusts of wind announced a storm; the clouds looked like a great threatening leaden wave, and the flashes of lightning followed each other rapidly.

The sun was now at the edge of the sea. Elise's heart quaked, when suddenly the swans shot downwards so suddenly, that she thought they were falling; then they hovered again. Half of the sun was below the horizon, and there for the first time she saw the little rock below, which did not look bigger than the head of a seal above the water. The sun sank very quickly, it was no bigger than a star, but her foot touched solid earth. The sun went out

like the last sparks of a bit of burning paper; she saw her brothers stand arm in arm around her, but there was only just room enough for them. The waves beat upon the rock and washed over them like drenching rain. The heavens shone with continuous fire, and the thunder rolled, peal upon peal. But the sister and brothers held each other's hands and sang a psalm which gave them comfort and courage.

The air was pure and still at dawn. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew off with Elise, away from the islet. The sea still ran high; it looked from where they were as if the white foam on the dark green water were millions of swans floating on the waves.

When the sun rose higher, Elise saw before her, half floating in the air, great masses of ice, with shining glaciers on the heights. A palace was perched midway a mile in length, with one bold colonnade built above another. Beneath them swayed palm trees and gorgeous blossoms as big as mill wheels. She asked if this was the land to which she was going, but the swans shook their heads, because what she saw was a mirage; the beautiful and ever-changing palace of Fata Morgana. No mortal dared enter it. Elise gazed at it, but as she gazed the palace, gardens and mountains melted away, and in their place stood twenty proud churches with their high towers and pointed windows. She seemed to hear the notes of the organ, but it was the sea she

heard. When she got close to the seeming churches, they changed to a great navy sailing beneath her; but it was only a sea mist floating over the waters. Yes, she saw constant changes passing before her eyes, and now she saw the real land she was bound to. Beautiful blue mountains rose before her with their cedar woods and palaces. Long before the sun went down, she sat among the hills in front of a big cave covered with delicate, green creepers. It looked like a piece of embroidery.

"Now we shall see what you will dream here to-night," said the youngest brother, as he showed her where she was to sleep.

"If only I might dream how I could deliver you," she said, and this thought filled her mind entirely. She prayed earnestly to God for His help, and even in her sleep she continued her prayer. It seemed to her that she was flying up to Fata Morgana in her castle in the air. The fairy came towards her; she was charming and brilliant, and yet she was very like the old woman who gave her the berries in the wood, and told her about the swans with the golden crowns.

"Your brothers can be delivered," she said, "but have you courage and endurance enough for it? The sea is indeed softer than your hands, and it moulds the hardest stones, but it does not feel the pain your fingers will feel. It has no heart, and does not suffer the pain and anguish you must feel. Do you see this stinging nettle I hold in my hand? Many of

this kind grow round the cave where you sleep; only these and the ones which grow in the churchyards may be used. Mark that! Those you may pluck although they will burn and blister your hands. Crush the nettles with your feet and you will have flax, and of this you must weave eleven coats of mail with long sleeves. Throw these over the eleven wild swans and the charm is broken! But remember that from the moment you begin this work, till it is finished, even if it takes years, you must not utter a word! The first word you say will fall like a murderer's dagger into the hearts of your brothers. Their lives hang on your tongue. Mark this well!"

She touched her hand at the same moment; it was like burning fire, and woke Elise. It was bright daylight, and close to where she slept lay a nettle like those in her dream. She fell upon her knees with thanks to God and left the cave to begin her work.

She seized the horrid nettles with her delicate hands, and they burnt like fire; great blisters rose on her hands and arms, but she suffered it willingly if only it would deliver her beloved brothers. She crushed every nettle with her bare feet, and twisted it into green flax.

When the sun went down and the brothers came back, they were alarmed at finding her mute; they thought it was some new witchcraft exercised by their wicked stepmother. But when they saw her

hands, they understood that it was for their sakes; the youngest brother wept, and wherever his tears fell, she felt no more pain, and the blisters disappeared.

She spent the whole night at her work, for she could not rest till she had delivered her dear brothers. All the following day, while her brothers were away, she sat solitary, but never had the time flown so fast. One coat of mail was finished and she began the next. Then a hunting-horn sounded among the mountains; she was much frightened, the sound came nearer, and she heard dogs barking. In terror she rushed into the cave and tied the nettles she had collected and woven, into a bundle upon which she sat.

At this moment a big dog bounded forward from the thicket, and another and another; they barked loudly, and ran backwards and forwards. In a few minutes all the huntsmen were standing outside the cave, and the handsomest of them was the king of the country. He stepped up to Elise: never had he seen so lovely a girl.

"How came you here, beautiful child?" he said.

Elise shook her head; she dared not speak; the salvation and the lives of her brothers depended upon her silence. She hid her hands under her apron, so that the king should not see what she suffered.

"Come with me!" he said; "you cannot stay here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silks and velvets, put a golden crown

upon your head, and you shall live with me and have your home in my richest palace!" Then he lifted her upon his horse. She wept and wrung her hands, but the king said, "I only think of your happiness; you will thank me one day for what I am doing!" Then he darted off across the mountains, holding her before him on his horse, and the huntsmen followed.

When the sun went down, the royal city with churches and cupolas lay before them, and the king led her into the palace, where great fountains played in the marble halls, and where walls and ceilings were adorned with paintings, but she had no eyes for them, she only wept and sorrowed; passively she allowed the women to dress her in royal robes, to twist pearls into her hair, and to draw gloves on to her blistered hands.

She was dazzlingly lovely as she stood there in all her magnificence; the courtiers bent low before her, and the king wooed her as his bride, although the archbishop shook his head, and whispered that he feared the beautiful wood maiden was a witch, who had dazzled their eyes and infatuated the king.

The king refused to listen to him; he ordered the music to play, the richest food to be brought, and the loveliest girls to dance before her. She was led through scented gardens into gorgeous apartments, but nothing brought a smile to her lips, or into her eyes; sorrow sat there like a heritage and a possession for all time. Last of all, the king opened

the door of a little chamber close by the room where she was to sleep. It was adorned with costly green carpets, and made to exactly resemble the cave where he found her. On the floor lay the bundle of flax she had spun from the nettles, and from the ceiling hung the shirt of mail which was already finished. One of the huntsmen had brought all these things away as curiosities.

"Here you may dream that you are back in your former home!" said the king. "Here is the work upon which you were engaged; in the midst of your splendour, it may amuse you to think of those times."

When Elise saw all these things so dear to her heart, a smile for the first time played upon her lips, and the blood rushed back to her cheeks. She thought of the deliverance of her brothers, and she kissed the king's hand; he pressed her to his heart, and ordered all the church bells to ring marriage peals. The lovely dumb girl from the woods was to be queen of the country.

The archbishop whispered evil words into the ear of the king, but they did not reach his heart. The wedding was to take place, and the archbishop himself had to put the crown upon her head. In his anger he pressed the golden circlet so tightly upon her head as to give her pain. But a heavier circlet pressed upon her heart, her grief for her brothers, so she thought nothing of the bodily pain. Her lips were sealed, a single word from her mouth would

cost her brothers their lives, but her eyes were full of love for the good and handsome king, who did everything he could to please her. Every day she grew more and more attached to him, and longed to confide in him, tell him her sufferings; but dumb she must remain, and in silence must bring her labour to completion. Therefore at night she stole away from his side into her secret chamber, which was decorated like a cave, and here she knitted one shirt after another. When she came to the seventh, all her flax was worked up; she knew that these nettles which she was to use grew in the churchyard, but she had to pluck them herself. How was she to get there? "Oh, what is the pain of my fingers compared with the anguish of my heart?" she thought. "I must venture out, the good God will not desert me!" With as much terror in her heart as if she were doing some evil deed, she stole down one night into the moonlit garden, and through the long alleys out into the silent streets to the churchyard. There she saw, sitting on a gravestone, a group of hideous ghouls, who took off their tattered garments, as if they were about to bathe, and stretched out their skinny fingers in the air, as if clutching at invisible things. Elise had to pass close by them, and they fixed their evil eyes upon her, but she said a prayer as she passed, picked the stinging nettles, and hurried back to the palace with them.

Only one person saw her, but that was the arch-

bishop, who watched while others slept. Surely now all his bad opinions of the queen were justified; all was not as it should be with her, she must be a witch, and therefore she had bewitched the king and all the people.

He told the king in the confessional what he had seen and what he feared. When those bad words passed his lips, the pictures of the saints shook their heads as if to say: "It is not so, Elise is innocent." The archbishop, however, took it differently, and thought that they were bearing witness against her, and shaking their heads at her sin. Two big tears rolled down the king's cheeks, and he went home with doubt in his heart. He pretended to sleep at night, but no quiet sleep came to his eyes. He perceived how Elise got up and went to her private closet. Day by day his face grew darker; Elise saw it but could not imagine what was the cause of it. It alarmed her, and what was she not already suffering in her heart because of her brothers? Her salt tears ran down upon the royal purple velvet; they lay upon it like sparkling diamonds, and all who saw their splendour wished to be queen.

She had, however, almost reached the end of her labours; only one shirt of mail was wanting, but again she had no more flax and not a single nettle was left. Once more, for the last time, she must go to the churchyard to pluck a few handfuls. She thought with dread of the solitary walk and the

horrible ghouls; but her will was as strong as her trust in God.

Elise went, but the king and the archbishop followed her; they saw her disappear within the grated gateway of the churchyard. When they followed they saw the ghouls sitting on the gravestone as Elise had seen them before; and the king turned away his head because he thought she was among them, she, whose head this very evening had rested on his breast.

"The people must judge her," he groaned; and the people judged: "Let her be consumed in the glowing flames!"

She was led away from her beautiful royal apartments to a dark, damp dungeon, where the wind whistled through the grated window. Instead of velvet and silk they gave her the bundle of nettles she had gathered, to lay her head upon. The hard, burning shirts of mail were to be her covering, but they could have given her nothing more precious.

She set to work again with many prayers to God. Outside her prison the street boys sang derisive songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

Towards evening she heard the rustle of a swan's wings close to her window; it was her youngest brother; at last he had found her. He sobbed aloud with joy, although he knew that the coming night might be her last, but then her work was almost done and her brothers were there.

The archbishop came to spend her last hours with her as he had promised the king. She shook her head at him, and by looks and gestures begged him to leave her. She had only this night in which to finish her work, or else all would be wasted, all—her pain, tears and sleepless nights. The archbishop went away with bitter words against her, but poor Elise knew that she was innocent, and she went on with her work.

The little mice ran about the floor bringing nettles to her feet, so as to give what help they could, and a thrush sat on the grating of the window where he sang all night, as merrily as he could, to keep up her courage.

It was still only dawn, and the sun would not rise for an hour, when the eleven brothers stood at the gate of the palace, begging to be taken to the king. This could not be done, was the answer, for it was still night; the king was asleep and no one dared wake him. All their entreaties and threats were useless; the watch turned out and even the king himself came to see what was the matter; but just then the sun rose, and no more brothers were to be seen, only eleven wild swans hovering over the palace.

The whole populace streamed out of the town gates; they were all anxious to see the witch burnt. A miserable horse drew the cart in which Elise was seated. They had put upon her a smock of green sacking, and all her beautiful long hair hung loose from the lovely head. Her cheeks were deathly pale,

and her lips moved softly, while her fingers unceasingly twisted the green yarn. Even on the way to her death she could not abandon her unfinished work. Ten shirts lay completed at her feet—she laboured away at the eleventh, amid the scoffing insults of the populace.

"Look at the witch how she mutters. She has never a book of psalms in her hands; no, there she sits with her loathsome sorcery. Tear it away from her into a thousand bits!"

The crowd pressed around her to destroy her work, but just then eleven white swans flew down and perched upon the cart, flapping their wings. The crowd gave way before them in terror.

"It is a sign from Heaven! She is innocent!" they whispered, but they dared not say it aloud.

The executioner seized her by the hand, but she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the swans, who were immediately transformed to eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing in place of an arm, for one sleeve was wanting to his shirt of mail; she had not been able to finish it.

"Now I may speak! I am innocent."

The populace who saw what had happened bowed down before her as if she had been a saint, but she sank lifeless in her brothers' arms; so great had been the strain, the terror, and the suffering she had endured.

"Yes, innocent she is indeed," said the eldest brother, and he told them all that had happened.

Whilst he spoke a wonderful fragrance spread around, as of millions of roses. Every faggot in the pile had taken root and shot out branches, and a great, high hedge of red roses had risen. At the very top was one pure white blossom; it shone like a star, and the king broke it off and laid it on Elise's bosom, and she woke with joy and peace in her heart.

All the church bells began to ring of their own accord, and the singing birds flocked around them. Surely such a bridal procession went back to the palace as no king had ever seen before!

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-BUSH

AROUND a garden was a fence of hazel-bushes, and beyond that were fields and meadows, with cows and sheep; but in the centre of the garden stood a Rose-bush in full bloom. Under it lay a Snail, who had a great deal in him, according to himself. "Wait till my time comes," said he; "I shall do a great deal more than yield roses, or bear nuts, or give milk as cows do."

"I expect an immense deal from you," said the Rose-bush. "May I ask when it is to come forth?"

"I shall take my time," replied the Snail. "You are always in such a hurry with your work, that curiosity about it is never excited."

The following year the Snail lay, almost in the same spot as formerly, in the sunshine under the Rose-bush; it was already in bud, and the buds had begun to expand into full-blown flowers, always fresh, always new. And the Snail crept half out, stretched forth its feelers, and then drew them in again.

"Everything looks just the same as last year; there is no progress to be seen anywhere. The Rose-bush is covered with roses—it will never get beyond that."

The summer passed, the autumn passed; the Rose-bush had yielded roses and buds up to the time that the snow fell. The weather became wet and tempestuous, the Rose-bush bowed down towards the ground, the Snail crept into the earth.

A new year commenced, the Rose-bush revived, and the Snail came forth again.

"You are now only an old stick of a Rose-bush," said he; "you must expect to wither away soon. You have given the world all that was in you. Whether that were worth much or not, is a question I have not time to take into consideration; but this is certain, that you have not done the least for your own improvement, else something very different might have been produced by you. Can you deny

this? You will soon become only a bare stick. Do you understand what I say?"

"You alarm me," cried the Rose-bush. "I never thought of this."

"No, you have never troubled yourself with thinking much. But have you not occasionally reflected why you blossomed, and in what way you blossomed —how in one way and not in another?"

"No," answered the Rose-bush; "I blossomed in gladness, for I could not do otherwise. The sun was so warm, the air so refreshing; I drank of the clear dew and the heavy rain; I breathed—I lived! There came up from the ground a strength to me, there came a strength from above. I experienced a degree of pleasure, always new, always great, and I was obliged to blossom. It was my life; I could not do otherwise."

"You have had a very easy life," remarked the Snail.

"To be sure, much has been granted to me," said the Rose-bush, "but no more will be bestowed on me now. *You* have one of those meditative, deeply thinking minds; one so endowed that you will astonish the world."

"I have by no means any such design," said the Snail. "The world is nothing to me. What have I to do with the world? I have enough to do with myself, and enough in myself."

"But should we not in this earth all give our best assistance to others—contribute what we can?

Yes! I have only been able to give roses; but you —you who have got so much—what have you given to the world? What will you give it?"

"What have I given? What will I give? I spit upon it! It is good for nothing! I have no interest in it. Produce your roses—you cannot do more than that—let the hazel-bushes bear nuts, let the cows give milk! You have each of you your public; I have mine within myself. I am going into myself, and shall remain there. The world is nothing to me."

And so the Snail withdrew into his house, and closed it up.

"What a sad pity it is!" exclaimed the Rose-bush. "*I* cannot creep into shelter, however much I might wish it. I must always spring out, spring out into roses. The leaves fall off, and they fly away on the wind. But I saw one of the roses laid in a Psalm-book belonging to the mistress of the house; another of my roses was placed on the breast of a young and beautiful girl, and another was kissed by a child's soft lips in an ecstasy of joy. I was so charmed at all this: it was a real happiness to me—one of the pleasant remembrances of my life."

And the Rose-bush bloomed on in innocence, while the Snail retired into his slimy house—the world was nothing to him!

Years flew on.

The Snail had returned to earth, the Rose-bush had returned to earth; also the dried rose-leaf in

the Psalm-book had disappeared. But new rose-bushes bloomed in the garden, and new snails were there; they crept into their houses, spitting—the world was nothing to them!

Shall we read their history too? It would not be different.

THE TINDER BOX

A SOLDIER came marching along the high road. One, two! One, two! He had his knapsack on his back and his sword at his side, for he had been to the wars and he was on his way home now. He met an old witch on the road; she was so ugly, her lower lip hung right down on to her chin.

She said, "Good evening, soldier! What a nice sword you've got, and such a big knapsack; you are a real soldier! You shall have as much money as ever you like!"

"Thank you kindly, you old witch!" said the soldier.

"Do you see that big tree?" said the witch, pointing to a tree close by. "It is hollow inside! Climb up to the top and you will see a hole into which you can let yourself down, right down under the tree! I will tie a rope round your waist so that I can haul you up again when you call!"

"What am I to do down under the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Fetch money!" said the witch. "You must know that when you get down to the bottom of the tree you will find yourself in a wide passage; it's quite light there, for there are over a hundred blazing lamps. You will see three doors which you can open, for the keys are there. If you go into the first room you will see a big box in the middle of the floor. A dog is sitting on the top of it, and he has eyes as big as saucers, but you needn't mind that. I will give you my blue checked apron, which you can spread out on the floor; then go quickly forward, take up the dog and put him on my apron, open the box and take out as much money as ever you like. It is all copper, but if you like silver better, go into the next room. There you will find a dog with eyes as big as millstones; but never mind that, put him on my apron and take the money. If you prefer gold you can have it too, and as much as you can carry, if you go into the third room. But the dog sitting on that box has eyes each as big as the Round Tower. He *is* a dog, indeed, as you may imagine! But don't let it trouble you; you only have to put him on to my apron and then he won't hurt you, and you can take as much gold out of the box as you like!"

"That's not so bad!" said the soldier. "But what am I to give you, old witch? For you'll want something, I'll be bound."

"No," said the witch, "not a single penny do I want; I only want you to bring me an old tinder box that my grandmother forgot the last time she was down there!"

"Well! tie the rope round my waist!" said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my blue checked apron."

Then the soldier climbed up the tree, let himself slide down the hollow trunk, and found himself, as the witch had said, in the wide passage where the many hundred lamps were burning.

Now he opened the first door. Ugh! There sat the dog with eyes as big as saucers staring at him.

"You are a nice fellow!" said the soldier, as he put him on the witch's apron, and took out as many pennies as he could cram into his pockets. Then he shut the box, and put the dog on the top of it again, and went into the next room. Hallo! there sat the dog with eyes as big as millstones.

"You shouldn't stare at me so hard; you might get a pain in your eyes!" Then he put the dog on the apron, but when he saw all the silver in the box he threw away all the coppers and stuffed his pockets and his knapsack with silver. Then he went on into the third room. Oh! how horrible! that dog really had two eyes as big as the Round Tower, and they rolled round and round like wheels.

"Good evening!" said the soldier, saluting, for

he had never seen such a dog in his life; but after looking at him for a bit he thought, "That will do," and then he lifted him down on to the apron and opened the chest. Preserve us! What a lot of gold! He could buy the whole of Copenhagen with it, and all the sugar-pigs from the cake-women, all the tin soldiers, whips and rocking-horses in the world! That was money indeed! Now the soldier threw away all the silver he had filled his pockets and his knapsack with, and put gold in its place. Yes, he crammed all his pockets, his knapsack, his cap and his boots so full that he could hardly walk! Now, he really had got a lot of money. He put the dog back on to the box, shut the door, and shouted up through the tree, "Haul me up, you old witch!"

"Have you got the tinder box?"

"Oh! to be sure!" said the soldier. "I had quite forgotten it." And he went back to fetch it. The witch hauled him up, and there he was standing on the high road again with his pockets, boots, knapsack and cap full of gold.

"What do you want the tinder box for?" asked the soldier.

"That's no business of yours," said the witch. "You've got the money; give me the tinder box!"

"Rubbish!" said the soldier. "Tell me directly what you want with it, or I will draw my sword and cut off your head."

"I won't!" said the witch.

Then the soldier cut off her head; there she lay! But he tied all the money up in her apron, slung it on his back like a pack, put the tinder box in his pocket, and marched off to the town.

It was a beautiful town, and he went straight to the finest hotel, ordered the grandest rooms and all the food he liked best, because he was a rich man now that he had so much money.

Certainly the servant who had to clean his boots thought they were very funny old things for such a rich gentleman, but he had not had time yet to buy any new ones; the next day he bought new boots and fine clothes. The soldier now became a fine gentleman, and the people told him all about the grand things in the town, and about their king, and what a lovely princess his daughter was.

"Where is she to be seen?" asked the soldier.

"You can't see her at all!" they all said. "She lives in a great copper castle surrounded with walls and towers. Nobody but the king dare go in and out, for it has been prophesied that she will marry a common soldier, and the king doesn't like that!"

"I should like to see her well enough!" thought the soldier. But there was no way of getting leave for that.

He now led a very merry life; went to theatres, drove about in the King's Park, and gave away a lot of money to poor people, which was very nice of him; for he remembered how disagreeable it used to

be not to have a penny in his pocket. Now he was rich, wore fine clothes, and had a great many friends, who all said what a nice fellow he was—a thorough gentleman—and he liked to be told that.

But as he went on spending money every day and his store was never renewed, he at last found himself with only twopence left. Then he was obliged to move out of his fine rooms. He had to take a tiny little attic up under the roof, clean his own boots, and mend them himself with a darning needle. None of his friends went to see him, because there were far too many stairs.

One dark evening when he had not even enough money to buy a candle with, he suddenly remembered that there was a little bit in the old tinder box he had brought out of the hollow tree, when the witch helped him down. He got out the tinder box with the candle end in it and struck fire; but as the sparks flew out from the flint the door burst open and the dog with eyes as big as saucers, which he had seen down under the tree, stood before him and said, "What does my lord command?"

"By heaven!" said the soldier, "this is a nice kind of tinder box, if I can get whatever I want like this! Get me some money," he said to the dog, and away it went.

It was back in a twinkling with a big bag full of pennies in its mouth.

Now the soldier saw what a treasure he had in the tinder box. If he struck once, the dog which

sat on the box of copper came; if he struck twice, the dog on the silver box came; and if he struck three times, the one from the box of gold.

He now moved down to the grand rooms and got his fine clothes again, and then all his friends knew him once more and liked him as much as ever.

Then he suddenly began to think: "After all it's a curious thing that no man can get a sight of the princess! Everyone says she is so beautiful! But what is the good of that, when she always has to be shut up in that big copper palace with all the towers? Can I not somehow manage to see her? Where is my tinder box?" Then he struck the flint, and, whisk! came the dog with eyes as big as saucers.

"It certainly is the middle of the night," said the soldier, "but I am very anxious to see the princess, if only for a single moment."

The dog was out of the door in an instant, and before the soldier had time to think about it, he was back again with the princess. There she was fast asleep on the dog's back, and she was so lovely that anybody could see that she must be a real princess! The soldier could not help it, but he was obliged to kiss her, for he was a true soldier.

Then the dog ran back again with the princess, but in the morning when the king and queen were having breakfast, the princess said that she had had such a wonderful dream about a dog and a soldier. She had ridden on the dog's back, and the soldier had kissed her.

"That's a pretty tale," said the queen.

After this an old lady-in-waiting had to sit by her bed at night to see if this was really a dream, or what it could be.

The soldier longed so intensely to see the princess again that at night the dog came to fetch her. He took her up and ran off with her as fast as he could, but the old lady-in-waiting put on her goloshes and ran just as fast behind them; when she saw that they disappeared into a large house, she thought "Now I know where it is," and made a big cross with chalk on the gate. Then she went home and lay down, and presently the dog came back, too, with the princess. When he saw that there was a cross on the gate, he took a bit of chalk, too, and made crosses on all the gates in the town. Now this was very clever of him, for the lady-in-waiting could not possibly find the gate when there were crosses on all the gates.

Early next morning the king, the queen, the lady-in-waiting, and all the court officials went to see where the princess had been.

"There it is," said the king, when he saw the first door with the cross on it.

"No, my dear husband, it is there," said the queen, who saw another door with a cross on it.

"But there is one, and there is another!" they all cried out.

They soon saw that it was hopeless to try and find it.

Now the queen was a very clever woman; she knew more than how to drive a chariot. She took her big gold scissors and cut up a large piece of silk into small pieces, and made a pretty little bag, which she filled with fine grains of buckwheat. She then tied it on to the back of the princess, and when that was done she cut a little hole in the bag, so that the grains could drop out all the way wherever the princess went.

At night the dog came again, took the princess on his back, and ran off with her to the soldier, who was so fond of her that he longed to be a prince, so that he might have her for his wife.

The dog never noticed how the grain dropped out all along the road from the palace to the soldier's window, where he ran up the wall with the princess.

In the morning the king and the queen easily saw where their daughter had been, and they seized the soldier and threw him into the dungeons.

There he lay! Oh, how dark and tiresome it was, and one day they said to him, "To-morrow you are to be hanged." It was not amusing to be told that, especially as he had left his tinder box behind him at the hotel.

In the morning he could see through the bars in the little window that the people were hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums and saw the soldiers marching along. All the world was going; among them was a shoemaker's boy in

his leather apron and slippers. He was in such a hurry that he lost one of his slippers, and it fell close under the soldier's window where he was peeping out through the bars.

"I say, you boy! Don't be in such a hurry," said the soldier to him. "Nothing will happen till I get there! But if you will run to the house where I used to live, and fetch me my tinder box, you shall have a penny! You must put your best foot foremost!"

The boy was only too glad to have the penny, and tore off to get the tinder box, gave it to the soldier, and—yes, now we shall hear.

Outside the town a high scaffold had been raised, and the soldiers were drawn up round about it, as well as crowds of the townspeople. The king and the queen sat upon a beautiful throne exactly opposite the judge and all the councillors.

The soldier mounted the ladder, but when they were about to put the rope round his neck, he said that before undergoing his punishment a criminal was always allowed the gratification of a harmless wish, and he wanted very much to smoke a pipe, as it would be his last pipe in this world.

The king would not deny him this, so the soldier took out his tinder box and struck fire, once, twice, three times—and there were all the dogs. The one with eyes like saucers, the one with eyes like mill-stones, and the one whose eyes were as big as the Round Tower.

"Help me! Save me from being hanged!" cried the soldier.

And then the dogs rushed at the soldiers and the councillors; they took one by the legs, and another by the nose, and threw them up many fathoms into the air; and when they fell down, they were broken all to pieces.

"I won't!" cried the king, but the biggest dog took both him and the queen and threw them after all the others. Then the soldiers became alarmed, and the people shouted, "Oh! good soldier, you shall be our king and marry the beautiful princess!"

Then they conducted the soldier to the king's chariot, and all three dogs danced along in front of him and shouted "Hurrah!" The boys all put their fingers in their mouths and whistled, and the soldiers presented arms. The princess came out of the copper palace and became queen, which pleased her very much. The wedding took place in a week, and the dogs all had seats at the table, where they sat staring with all their eyes.

THE BUTTERFLY

THE butterfly was looking out for a bride, and naturally he wished to select a nice one among the flowers. He looked at them, sitting so quietly and discreetly upon their stems, as a damsel generally sits when she is not engaged; but there were so many to choose among, that it became quite a difficult matter. The Butterfly did not relish encountering difficulties, so in his perplexity he flew to the Daisy. She is called in France *Marguerite*. He knew that she could speak, and that she did so often; for lovers plucked leaf after leaf from her, and with each a question was asked respecting the beloved:—"Is it true love?" "From the heart?" "Love that pines?" "Cold love?" "None at all?"—or some such questions. Everyone asks in his own language. The Butterfly came, too, to put his questions; he did not, however, pluck off the leaves, but kissed them all, one by one, with the hope of getting a good answer.

"Sweet Marguerite Daisy," said he, "you are the wisest wife among all the flowers; you know how to predict events. Tell me, shall I get this one or that? Or whom shall I get? When I know, I can fly straight to the fair one, and commence wooing her."

But Marguerite would scarcely answer him; she was vexed at his calling her "wife." He asked a

second time, and he asked a third time, but he could not get a word out of her; so he would not take the trouble to ask any more, but flew away without further ado on his matrimonial errand.

It was in the early spring, and there were plenty of Snowdrops and Crocuses. "They are very nice-looking," said the Butterfly, "charming little things, but somewhat too juvenile." He, like most very young men, preferred elder girls. Thereupon he flew to the Anemones, but they were rather too bashful for him; the Violets were too enthusiastic; the Tulips were too fond of show; the Jonquils were too plebeian; the Linden-tree blossoms were too small, and they had too large a family connection; the Apple blossoms were certainly as lovely as Roses to look at, but they stood to-day and fell off to-morrow, as the wind blew. It would not be worth while to enter into wedlock for so short a time, he thought. The Sweet-pea was the one that pleased him most; she was pink and white, she was pure and delicate, and belonged to that class of notable girls who always look well, yet can make themselves useful in the kitchen. He was on the point of making an offer to her when at that moment he observed a pea-pod hanging close by, with a withered flower at the end of it. "Who is that?" he asked. "My sister," replied the Sweet-pea. "Indeed! then you will probably come to look like her, by-and-by," screamed the Butterfly as he flew on.

The Honeysuckles hung over the ledge; they were

extremely ladylike, but they had long faces and yellow complexions. They were not to his taste. But who was to his taste? Ay, ask him that!

The spring had passed, the summer had passed, and autumn was passing too. The flowers were still clad in brilliant robes, but, alas! the fresh fragrance of youth was gone. Fragrance was a great attraction to him, though no longer young himself, and there was none to be found among the Dahlias and Hollyhocks.

So the Butterfly stooped down to the Wild Thyme.

"She has scarcely any blossom, but she is altogether a flower herself, and all fragrance—every leaflet is full of it. I will take her."

So he began to woo forthwith.

But the Wild Thyme stood stiff and still, and at length she said, "Friendship, but nothing more! I am old, and you are old. We may very well live for each other, but marry—no! Let us not make fools of ourselves in our old age!"

So the Butterfly got no one. He had been too long on the look-out, and that one should not be. The Butterfly became an old bachelor, as it is called.

It was late in the autumn, and there was nothing but drizzling rain and pouring rain; the wind blew coldly on the old willow trees till the leaves shivered and the branches cracked. It was not pleasant to fly about in summer clothing; this is the time, it is said, when domestic love is most needed. But the Butterfly flew about no more. He had accident-

ally gone within doors, where there was fire in the stove—yes, real summer heat. He could live, but "To live is not enough," said he; "sunshine, freedom, and a little flower, one must have."

And he flew against the window pane, was observed, admired, and stuck upon a needle in a case of curiosities. There they could not do more for him.

"Now I am sitting on a stem, like the flowers," said the Butterfly; "very pleasant it is not, however. It is almost like being married, one is tied so fast." And he tried to comfort himself with this reflection.

"That is poor comfort!" exclaimed the plants in the flower pots in the room.

"But one can hardly believe a plant in a flower pot," thought the Butterfly; "they are too much among human beings."

THE RACERS

A PRIZE, or rather two prizes, a great one and a small one, had been awarded for the greatest swiftness in running—not in a single race, but for the whole year.

"I obtained the first prize," said the hare. "Justice must still be carried out, even when one has relations and good friends among the prize com-

mittee; but that the snail should have received the second prize, I consider almost an insult to myself."

"No," said the fence-rail, who had been a witness at the distribution of prizes; "there should be some consideration for industry and perseverance. I have heard many respectable people say so, and I can quite understand it. The snail certainly took half a year to get over the threshold of the door; but he injured himself, and broke his collar-bone by the haste he made. He gave himself up entirely to the race, and ran with his house on his back, which was all, of course, very praiseworthy; and therefore he obtained the second prize."

"I think I ought to have had some consideration too," said the swallow. "I should imagine no one can be swifter in soaring and flight than I am! and how far have I been! far, far away."

"Yes, that is your misfortune," said the fence-rail; "you are so fickle, so unsettled; you must always be travelling about into foreign lands when the cold commences here. You have no love of fatherland in you. There can be no consideration for you."

"But now, if I have been lying the whole winter in the moor," said the swallow, "and suppose I slept the whole time, would that be taken into account?"

"Bring a certificate from the old moor-hen," said he, "that you have slept away half your time in

the fatherland; then you will be treated with some consideration."

"I deserved the first prize, and not the second," said the snail. "I know so much, at least, that the hare only ran from cowardice, and because he thought there was danger in delay. I, on the other hand, made running the business of my life, and have become a cripple in the service. If any one had a first prize, it ought to have been myself. But I do not understand chattering and boasting; on the contrary, I despise it." And the snail spat at them with contempt.

"I am able to affirm with word of oath, that each prize—at least, those for which I voted—was given with just and proper consideration," said the old boundary post in the wood, who was a member of the committee of judges. "I always act with due order, consideration, and calculation. Seven times have I already had the honour to be present at the distribution of the prizes, and to vote; but to-day is the first time I have been able to carry out my will. I always reckon the first prize by going through the alphabet from the beginning, and the second by going through from the end. Be so kind as to give me your attention, and I will explain to you how I reckon from the beginning. The eighth letter from A is H, and there we have H for hare; therefore I awarded to the hare the first prize. The eighth letter from the end of the alphabet is S, and therefore the snail received the second prize. Next year,

the letter I will have its turn for the first prize, and the letter R for the second."

"I should really have voted for myself," said the mule, "if I had not been one of the judges on the committee. Not only the rapidity with which advance is made, but every other quality should have due consideration; as, for instance, how much weight a candidate is able to draw; but I have not brought this quality forward now, nor the sagacity of the hare in his flight, nor the cunning with which he suddenly springs aside and doubles, to lead people on a false track, thinking he has concealed himself. No; there is something else on which more stress should be laid, and which ought not to be left unnoticed. I mean that which mankind call the beautiful. It is on the beautiful that I particularly fix my eyes. I observed the well-grown ears of the hare; it is a pleasure to me to observe how long they are. It seemed as if I saw myself again in the days of my childhood; and so I voted for the hare."

"Buz," said the fly; "there, I'm not going to make a long speech; but I wish to say something about hares. I have really overtaken more than one hare, when I have been seated on the engine in front of a railway train. I often do so. One can then so easily judge of one's own swiftness. Not long ago, I crushed the hind legs of a young hare. He had been running a long time before the engine; he had no idea that *I* was travelling there. At last he had to stop in his career, and the engine ran over his

hind legs, and crushed them; for *I* sat upon it. I left him lying there, and rode on farther. I call that conquering him; but I do not want the prize."

"It really seems to me," thought the wild rose, though she did not express her opinion aloud—it is not in her nature to do so, though it would have been quite as well if she had; "it certainly seems to me that the sunbeam ought to have had the honour of receiving the first prize. The sunbeam flies in a few minutes along the immeasurable path from the sun to us. It arrives in such strength, that all nature awakes to loveliness and beauty; we roses blush and exhale fragrance in its presence. Our worshipful judges don't appear to have noticed this at all. Were I the sunbeam, I would give each one of them a sun-stroke; but that would only make them mad, and they are mad enough already. I only hope," continued the rose, "that peace may reign in the wood. It is glorious to bloom, to be fragrant, and to live; to live in story and in song. The sunbeam will outlive us all."

"What is the first prize?" asked the earthworm, who had overslept the time, and only now came up.

"It contains a free admission to a cabbage-garden," replied the mule. "I proposed that as one of the prizes. The hare most decidedly must have it; and I, as an active and thoughtful member of the committee, took especial care that the prize should be one of advantage to him; so now he is provided for. The snail can now sit on the fence,

and lick up moss and sunshine. He has also been appointed one of the first judges of swiftness in racing. It is worth much to know that *one* of the members is a man of talent in the thing men call a 'committee.' I must say I expect much in the future; we have already made such a good beginning."

THE UGLY DUCKLING

THE country was lovely just then; it was summer. The wheat was golden and the oats still green; the hay was stacked in the rich low-lying meadows, where the stork was marching about on his long, red legs, chattering Egyptian, the language his mother had taught him.

Round about field and meadow lay great woods, in the midst of which were deep lakes. Yes, the country certainly was delicious. In the sunniest spot stood an old mansion surrounded by a deep moat, and great dock leaves grew from the walls of the house right down to the water's edge; some of them were so tall that a small child could stand upright under them. In amongst the leaves it was as secluded as in the depths of a forest; and there a duck was sitting on her nest. Her little ducklings were just about to be hatched, but she was nearly

tired of sitting, for it had lasted such a long time. Moreover, she had very few visitors, as the other ducks liked swimming about in the moat better than waddling up to sit under the dock leaves and gossip with her.

At last one egg after another began to crack. "Cheep, cheep!" they said. All the chicks had come to life, and were poking their heads out.

"Quack! quack!" said the duck; and then they all quacked their hardest, and looked about them on all sides among the green leaves; their mother allowed them to look as much as they liked, for green is good for the eyes.

"How big the world is, to be sure!" said all the young ones; for they certainly had ever so much more room to move about, than when they were inside in the egg-shell.

"Do you imagine this is the whole world?" said the mother. "It stretches a long way on the other side of the garden, right into the parson's field; but I have never been as far as that! I suppose you are all here now?" and she got up. "No! I declare I have not got you all yet! The biggest egg is still there; how long is it going to last?" and then she settled herself on the nest again.

"Well, how are you getting on?" said an old duck who had come to pay her a visit.

"This one egg is taking such a long time," answered the sitting duck, "the shell will not crack; but now you must look at the others; they are the

finest ducklings I have ever seen! they are exactly like their father, the rascal! He never comes to see me."

"Let me look at the egg which won't crack," said the old duck. "You may be sure that it is a turkey's egg! I have been cheated like that once, and I had no end of trouble and worry with the creatures, for I may tell you that they are afraid of the water. I could not get them into it; I quacked and snapped at them, but it was no good. Let me see the egg! Yes, it is a turkey's egg! You just leave it alone and teach the other children to swim."

"I will sit on it a little longer; I have sat so long already, that I may as well go on till the Midsummer Fair comes round."

"Please yourself," said the old duck, and she went away.

At last the big egg cracked. "Cheep, cheep!" said the young one and tumbled out; how big and ugly he was! The duck looked at him.

"That is a monstrous big duckling," she said; "none of the others looked like that; can he be a turkey chick? Well, we shall soon find that out; into the water he shall go, if I have to kick him in myself."

Next day was gloriously fine, and the sun shone on all the green dock-leaves. The mother duck with her whole family went down to the moat.

Splash! into the water she sprang. "Quack, quack!" she said, and one duckling plumped in

after the other. The water dashed over their heads, but they came up again and floated beautifully; their legs went of themselves, and they were all there; even the big ugly grey one swam about with them.

"No, that is no turkey," she said; "see how beautifully he uses his legs and how erect he holds himself: he is my own chick! after all, he is not so bad when you come to look at him properly. Quack, quack! Now come with me and I will take you into the world, and introduce you to the duckyard; but keep close to me all the time, so that no one may tread upon you, and beware of the cat!"

Then they went into the duckyard. There was a fearful uproar going on, for two broods were fighting for the head of an eel, and in the end the cat captured it.

"That's how things go in this world," said the mother duck, and she licked her bill, for she wanted the eel's head herself.

"Use your legs," said she; "mind you quack properly, and bend your necks to the old duck over there! She is the grandest of them all; she has Spanish blood in her veins and that accounts for her size, and, do you see? she has a red rag round her leg; that is a wonderfully fine thing, and the most extraordinary mark of distinction any duck can have. It shows clearly that she is not to be parted with, and that she is worthy of recognition

both by beasts and men! Quack now! don't turn your toes in, a well brought up duckling keeps his legs wide apart just like father and mother; that's it, now bend your necks, and say quack!"

They did as they were bid, but the other ducks round about looked at them and said, quite loud: "Just look there! now we are to have that tribe! just as if there were not enough of us already; and, oh dear! how ugly that duckling is—we won't stand him!" and a duck flew at him at once and bit him in the neck.

"Let him be," said the mother; "he is doing no harm."

"Very likely not, but he is so ungainly and queer," said the biter; "he must be whacked."

"They are handsome children mother has," said the old duck with the rag round her leg; "all good looking except this one, and he is not a good specimen; it's a pity you can't make him over again."

"That can't be done, your grace," said the mother duck; "he is not handsome, but he is a thoroughly good creature, and he swims as beautifully as any of the others; nay, I think I might venture even to add that I think he will improve as he goes on, or perhaps in time he may grow smaller! he was too long in the egg, and so he has not come out with a very good figure." And then she patted his neck and stroked him down. "Besides, he is a drake," said she; "so it does not matter so much. I believe

he will be very strong, and I don't doubt but he will make his way in the world."

"The other ducklings are very pretty," said the old duck. "Now make yourselves quite at home, and if you find the head of an eel you may bring it to me!"

After that they felt quite at home. But the poor duckling which had been the last to come out of the shell, and who was so ugly, was bitten, pushed about, and made fun of both by the ducks and the hens. "He is too big," they all said; and the turkey-cock, who was born with his spurs on, and therefore thought himself quite an emperor, puffed himself up like a vessel in full sail, made for him, and gobbled and gobbled till he became quite red in the face. The poor duckling was at his wits' end, and did not know which way to turn; he was in despair because he was so ugly, and the butt of the whole duckyard.

So the day passed, and afterwards matters grew worse and worse. The poor duckling was chased and hustled by all of them, even his brothers and sisters ill-used him; and they were always saying, "If only the cat would get hold of you, you hideous object!" Even his mother said, "I wish to goodness you were miles away." The ducks bit him, the hens pecked him, and the girl who fed them kicked him aside.

Then he ran off and flew right over the hedge, where the little birds flew up into the air in a fright.

"That is because I am so ugly," thought the poor duckling, shutting his eyes; but he ran on all the same. Then he came to a great marsh where the wild ducks lived; he was so tired and miserable that he stayed there the whole night.

In the morning the wild ducks flew up to inspect their new comrade.

"What sort of a creature are you?" they inquired, as the duckling turned from side to side and greeted them as well as he could. "You are frightfully ugly," said the wild ducks; "but that does not matter to us, so long as you do not marry into our family!" Poor fellow! he had no thought of marriage; all he wanted was permission to lie among the rushes, and to drink a little of the marsh water.

He stayed there two whole days; then two wild geese came, or rather two wild ganders; they were not long out of the shell, and therefore rather pert.

"I say, comrade," they said, "you are so ugly that we have taken quite a fancy to you; will you join us and be a bird of passage? There is another marsh close by, and there are some charming wild geese there; all sweet young ladies, who can say quack! You are ugly enough to make your fortune among them." Just at that moment, bang! bang! was heard up above, and both the wild geese fell dead among the reeds, and the water turned blood red. Bang! bang! went the guns, and whole flocks of wild geese flew up from the rushes and the shot peppered among them again.

There was a grand shooting party, and the sportsmen lay hidden round the marsh; some even sat on the branches of the trees which overhung the water; the blue smoke rose like clouds among the dark trees and swept over the pool.

The water-dogs wandered about in the swamp, splash! splash! The rushes and reeds bent beneath their tread on all sides. It was terribly alarming to the poor duckling. He twisted his head round to get it under his wing and just at that moment a frightful, big dog appeared close beside him; his tongue hung right out of his mouth and his eyes glared wickedly. He opened his great chasm of a mouth close to the duckling, showed his sharp teeth —and—splash—went on without touching him.

" Oh, thank Heaven! " sighed the duckling, " I am so ugly that even the dog won't bite me! "

Then he lay quite still while the shot whistled among the bushes, and bang after bang rent the air. It only became quiet late in the day, but even then the poor duckling did not dare to get up; he waited several hours more before he looked about, and then he hurried away from the marsh as fast he could. He ran across fields and meadows, and there was such a wind that he had hard work to make his way.

Towards night he reached a poor little cottage; it was such a miserable hovel that it could not make up its mind which way to fall even, and so it remained standing. The wind whistled so fiercely round the duckling that he had to sit on his tail to

resist it, and it blew harder and harder; then he saw that the door had fallen off one hinge and hung so crookedly that he could creep into the house through the crack, and by this means he made his way into the room. An old woman lived there with her cat and her hen. The cat, which she called "Sonnie," could arch his back, purr, and give off electric sparks; that is to say if you stroked his fur the wrong way. The hen had quite tiny short legs and so she was called "Chuckie-low-legs." She laid good eggs, and the old woman was as fond of her as if she had been her own child.

In the morning the strange duckling was discovered immediately, and the cat began to purr and the hen to cluck.

"What on earth is that!" said the old woman looking round, but her sight was not good and she thought the duckling was a fat duck which had escaped. "This is a capital find," said she; "now I shall have duck's eggs if only it is not a drake! we must find out about that!"

So she took the duckling on trial for three weeks, but no eggs made their appearance. The cat was the master of the house and the hen the mistress, and they always spoke of "we and the world," for they thought that they represented the half of the world, and that quite the better half.

The duckling thought there might be two opinions on the subject, but the hen would not hear of it.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No!"

"Will you have the goodness to hold your tongue then!"

And the cat said, "Can you arch your back, purr, or give off sparks?"

"No."

"Then you had better keep your opinions to yourself when people of sense are speaking!"

The duckling sat in the corner nursing his ill-humour; then he began to think of the fresh air and the sunshine, an uncontrollable longing seized him to float on the water, and at last he could not help telling the hen about it.

"What on earth possesses you?" she asked. "You have nothing to do; that is why you get these freaks into your head. Lay some eggs or take to purring, and you will get over it."

"But it is so delicious to float on the water," said the duckling; "so delicious to feel it rushing over your head when you dive to the bottom."

"That would be a fine amusement," said the hen. "I think you have gone mad. Ask the cat about it, he is the wisest creature I know; ask him if he is fond of floating on the water or diving under it. I say nothing about myself. Ask our mistress yourself, the old woman; there is no one in the world cleverer than she is. Do you suppose she has any desire to float on the water, or to duck underneath it?"

"You do not understand me," said the duckling.

"Well, if we don't understand you, who should?

I suppose you don't consider yourself cleverer than the cat or the old woman, not to mention me. Don't make a fool of yourself, child, and thank your stars for all the good we have done you! Have you not lived in this warm room, and in such society that you might have learnt something? But you are an idiot, and there is no pleasure in associating with you. You may believe me, I mean you well; I tell you home truths, and there is no surer way than that, of knowing who are one's friends. You just see about laying some eggs, or learn to purr, or to emit sparks."

"I think I will go out into the wide world," said the duckling.

"Oh, do so, by all means," said the hen.

So away went the duckling, he floated on the water and ducked underneath it, but he was looked askance at by every living creature for his ugliness. Now the autumn came on, the leaves in the woods turned yellow and brown; the wind took hold of them, and they danced about. The sky looked very cold, and the clouds hung heavy with snow and hail. A raven stood on the fence and croaked "Caw! Caw!" from sheer cold; it made one shiver only to think of it; the poor duckling certainly was in a bad case.

One evening, the sun was just setting in wintry splendour, when a flock of beautiful large birds appeared out of the bushes; the duckling had never seen anything so beautiful. They were dazzlingly white with long waving necks; they were swans,

and uttering a peculiar cry they spread out their magnificent broad wings and flew away from the cold regions to warmer lands and open seas. They mounted so high, so very high, and the ugly little duckling became strangely uneasy; he circled round and round in the water like a wheel, craning his neck up into the air after them. Then he uttered a shriek so piercing and so strange, that he was quite frightened by it himself. Oh, he could not forget those beautiful birds, those happy birds, and as soon as they were out of sight he ducked right down to the bottom, and when he came up again he was quite beside himself. He did not know what the birds were, or whither they flew, but all the same he was more drawn towards them than he had ever been by any creatures before. He did not envy them in the least; how could it occur to him even to wish to be such a marvel of beauty; he would have been thankful if only the ducks would have tolerated him among them—the poor ugly creature!

The winter was so bitterly cold that the duckling was obliged to swim about in the water to keep it from freezing, but every night the hole in which he swam got smaller and smaller. Then it froze so hard that the surface ice cracked, and the duckling had to use his legs all the time, so that the ice should not close in round him; at last he was so weary that he could move no more, and he was frozen fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came along and

saw him; he went out on to the ice and hammered a hole in it with his heavy wooden shoe, and carried the duckling home to his wife. There it soon revived. The children wanted to play with it, but the duckling thought they were going to ill-use him, and rushed in his fright into the milk pan, and the milk spurted out all over the room. The woman shrieked and threw up her hands; then it flew into the butter cask, and down into the meal tub and out again. Just imagine what it looked like by this time! The woman screamed and tried to hit it with the tongs, and the children tumbled over one another in trying to catch it, and they screamed with laughter—by good luck the door stood open, and the duckling flew out among the bushes and the new fallen snow —and it lay there thoroughly exhausted.

But it would be too sad to mention all the privation and misery it had to go through during that hard winter. When the sun began to shine warmly again, the duckling was in the marsh, lying among the rushes; the larks were singing and the beautiful spring had come.

Then all at once it raised its wings and they flapped with much greater strength than before, and bore him off vigorously. Before he knew where he was, he found himself in a large garden where the apple trees were in full blossom, and the air was scented with lilacs, the long branches of which overhung the indented shores of the lake! Oh! the spring freshness was so delicious!

Just in front of him he saw three beautiful white swans advancing towards him from a thicket; with rustling feathers they swam lightly over the water. The duckling recognised the majestic birds, and he was overcome by a strange melancholy.

"I will fly to them, the royal birds, and they will hack me to pieces, because I, who am so ugly, venture to approach them! But it won't matter; better be killed by them than be snapped at by the ducks, pecked by the hens, or spurned by the hen-wife, or suffer so much misery in the winter."

So he flew into the water and swam towards the stately swans; they saw him and darted towards him with ruffled feathers.

"Kill me, oh, kill me!" said the poor creature, and bowing his head towards the water he awaited his death. But what did he see reflected in the transparent water?

He saw below him his own image, but he was no longer a clumsy dark grey bird, ugly and ungainly; he was himself a swan! It does not matter in the least having been born in a duckyard, if only you come out of a swan's egg!

He felt quite glad of all the misery and tribulation he had gone through; he was the better able to appreciate his good fortune now, and all the beauty which greeted him. The big swans swam round and round him, and stroked him with their bills.

Some little children came into the garden with corn and pieces of bread, which they threw into the

water; and the smallest one cried out: "There is a new one!" The other children shouted with joy, "Yes, a new one has come!" And they clapped their hands and danced about, running after their father and mother. They threw the bread into the water, and one and all said that the new one was the prettiest; he was so young and handsome. And the old swans bent their heads and did homage before him.

He felt quite shy, and hid his head under his wing; he did not know what to think; he was so very happy, but not at all proud; a good heart never becomes proud. He thought of how he had been pursued and scorned, and now he heard them all say that he was the most beautiful of all beautiful birds. The lilacs bent their boughs right down into the water before him, and the bright sun was warm and cheering, and he rustled his feathers and raised his slender neck aloft, saying with exultation in his heart: "I never dreamt of so much happiness when I was the Ugly Duckling!"

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

THE MERMAID

I. Oral Composition

1. Is *The Mermaid* a sad story? Which parts seem to you the most pathetic? What was the hardest thing the mermaid had to bear? Can you suggest a different ending? How could we think of this story as not sad?

2. Give instances of the sea-maid's (*a*) tenderness, (*b*) heroism, (*c*) faithfulness, (*d*) self-sacrifice.

3. Relate what the five sisters saw when they first rose to the surface. Which had the most delightful experience? Why do you think so?

4. How was the maid to obtain an immortal soul, according to (*a*) her grandmother, (*b*) the spirits of the air?

5. "You must endure the pain for the sake of the finery." Why was the grandmother so particular about the oysters on her tail? Was the author jesting? Do you remember his joke about keeping a secret?

6. Picture in your mind and describe (*a*) the witch, (*b*) the prince, (*c*) the mermaid's garden, (*d*) the old grandmother.

7. Why was the maid changed into an air-spirit?

8. "She became fonder of mankind . . . their world

seemed so infinitely bigger than hers." How was she right?

9. Describe the sea and sky when they have seemed to you (*a*) the most beautiful, (*b*) angry, (*c*) peaceful, (*d*) terrible, (*e*) weird, (*f*) laughing, (*g*) sad.

2. Written Composition

1. Notice the author's use of:

(*a*) *Colour-words.*

"Shadows showed violet"; "mussel-shells, rose-red and grass-green"; "pink-tinted dawn"; "fish with shining scales of crimson hue, while others were gold and silvery."

Find other examples, and use the following colour-words in as beautiful sentences as you can construct: Pearly, grey, amber, blue, white, brown.

(*b*) *Other suitable adjectives* to make his story richly descriptive.

"A curious child, quiet and thoughtful"; "the fresh, delicate branches"; "graceful, undulating dances"; "thick but transparent glass."

Find other examples, and use suitable adjectives with these nouns: Waves, fountain, shadows, merman, hills.

(*c*) *Beautiful comparisons or similes.*

"Her skin was as soft and delicate as a rose-leaf, her eyes as blue as the deepest sea." "Hundreds of rockets were let off . . . it was just as if all the stars of heaven were falling in showers." "A flock of wild swans flew like a long white veil."

Find other examples, and make comparisons for the

waves dashing against the rocks, the wind whistling through the trees, the grass wet with dew, the snow on the hill-tops.

(*d*) *Contrasts in descriptions.* He pictures his scenes in winter and summer, calm and storm; at morning and night; during festivities and the after-quietness.

2. Choose one of the following for a composition: (*a*) A Sunset; (*b*) The Sea in Winter and Summer; (*c*) A Shipwreck; (*d*) The Palace of the Mer-king. Use comparisons where possible.

3. Write out a conversation between two air-spirits, giving an account of the various good works done by them during the day.

4. Make a list of the things you would see during a walk on the sea-shore, adding adjectives or phrases aptly describing them; *e.g.:* Grey storm-clouds; white foam blown by the wind; sea-birds wheeling overhead.

5. Give the parts of the story, showing how it is constructed; *e.g.:* (*a*) Description of the home under the water; (*b*) adventures of the sisters; (*c*) . . . . .; (*d*) . . . . ., etc.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find in your dictionary the meanings of the following words: Remotest, grotesque, zigzags, interlacing, fête, undulating, ethereal. Write down words and meanings in your note-book.

2. Obtain, from encyclopædia or other source, information about life in the sea-depths. Make notes and sketches for use in future essay.

3. In connection with this story read aloud:[1]

"The Forsaken Merman," Matthew Arnold (ii. 69).
"A Shipwreck," Byron (iii. 70).
"The Ocean," Byron (iii. 62).
"Sea-dirge," Shakespeare (ii. 43).
"The Music of the Sea," Reed Moorhouse (ii. 65).

THE GOBLIN AND THE HUCKSTER

1. Oral Composition

1. Relate the story.

2. How do you explain (*a*) the wonderful tree growing out of the book; (*b*) the sweet songs heard in the darkness? Tell me of any poems you have read which made you see beautiful things, or which you like to remember for their music.

3. What opinions were held as to the value of poetry by (*a*) the huckster; (*b*) the tub, butter-cask and cash-box; (*c*) the student? Give reasons for their different ideas. What do *you* think about poetry?

4. "What the majority agree upon must be respected." Was it true in this case? If the author did not believe the statement, why did he write it? Can you mention any men who have disagreed with the majority and proved it wrong?

[1] The poems suggested for reading are to be found in most modern school anthologies. The numbers refer to their position (Part and page) in the *Ivory Gate, A Garland of Verses for Children*, published by Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

5. How was it that the tub gained so much respect from the rest of the shop? What made him so full of information? The goblin could not stop to listen. Why?

6. When the fire broke out, what treasure was seized by (*a*) the huckster, (*b*) his wife, (*c*) the maid-servant, (*d*) the goblin? What prompted the choice of each?

7. What could be said in favour of the huckster's point of view? Which do you consider the most sensible: the shopkeeper, the goblin, or the scholar?

2. Written Composition

1. Choose one of the following for composition:

(*a*) An account (as if told by the goblin) of what he saw through the keyhole.

(*b*) Picture the goblin in your mind and describe him in words.

(*c*) A conversation between the cash-box and the butter-tub about the student, making their words express what such things would be likely to think.

2. Use the following phrases in sentences of your own: A very instructive place; buried in something he found printed; conferred the power of speech; making a charming lullaby; the tree of knowledge; the leaning of his heart.

3. Read aloud the description of the fire. Notice the use of the short sentences to suggest hurry and excitement. Employ the same method yourself in a description of a fire at school, or on a ship or train.

4. Write an original short story showing that what the majority think may be wrong; or write down your thoughts on "Poetry."

5. Construct apt comparisons for: Trees showing black in the twilight; moonbeams dancing on the water; apples reddening on the branches; foam blowing on the sands; men at work in an iron foundry.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find the meanings of the following words in your dictionary: Practical, conferred, glibly, volubility. Enter in note-book.

2. From encyclopædia or other source find how the following held ideas not accepted by the majority: Columbus, Galileo, George Stephenson, Mahomet, Marconi, Rowland Hill.

3. Read aloud:

The opening lines of "Endymion," Keats (iv. 63).
Verses from "Ode to a Skylark," Shelley (iii. 49).

THE HAPPY FAMILY

1. Oral Composition

1. How came the mother-snail to see her child get bigger when it did not grow? Was the father's judgment much better?

2. Give the opinion of the snails about (*a*) their importance, (*b*) the size of the world, (*c*) why it had been created. Had it been made for them really, or for *you*?

3. Two of you, as if you were the snails conversing,

state the various advantages you enjoy in the burdock-wood.

4. Why did they look forward to being boiled and laid on a silver dish? Though they never achieved their ambition, the whole family were perfectly happy. What made them so?

5. Discuss what was meant by: (*a*) "There may be black snails without houses, but they are so vulgar." (*b*) "The father could not speak; he was too much overcome." (*c*) "As nobody contradicted them, they thought they must be right."

2. Written Composition

1. The mother-snail would talk to her future daughter on her arrival. Write down what she would tell her.

2. Write a composition on "A Neglected Garden."

3. "Listen, what a drumming there is on the burdock leaves; tum, tum, tum; tum, tum, tum." Make similar sentences about (*a*) the rain on the window-pane, (*b*) stones falling into a pond, (*c*) a horse galloping, (*d*) the driver using his whip, (*e*) the water on the shores of a lake.

4. Write (in dialogue form) a talk between (*a*) a wasp and a butterfly, or (*b*) a frog and a tadpole.

5. Make sentences showing comparisons for: Apple-blossom on the trees; the clouds at sunset; a girl in her Sunday clothes; a rainy sky; a blue sky; the sun peeping out after a storm.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find and note meanings of: Fricassees, surviving, aristocratic, ancestors, commission.

2. Obtain information from a Nature book about toads, snails, ants, earth-worms and other creatures to be found in gardens. Make notes and sketches for future use.

3. Read aloud:

"The Happy Heart," Dekker (iii. 2).
"My Crown," Shakespeare (iii. 5).
"April Rain," Loveman (ii. 60).
"The World's Music," Setoun (ii. 23).

THE GARDEN OF PARADISE

1. Oral Composition

1. Which of the Winds would see the following: Dromedaries, walrus, buffalo, stormy petrels, ostriches, lions? Tell what you know about each creature.

2. Imagine the death of the old Phœnix and the birth of the new one. Describe what you see.

3. Which of the accounts of the travels of the Winds did you like best? Why?

4. Relate the grandmother's idea of the Garden of Paradise as a place for (*a*) food for the body, (*b*) food for the mind.

5. Describe the sky when the Winds were playing rounders with the clouds. Make sentences telling the occupations of the Winds (*a*) with clouds on a fine day, (*b*) with ships in a gale, (*c*) with leaves in spring, summer and autumn, (*d*) with snow and boulders on the Alps.

6. Which do you think the most wonderful piece of descriptive writing in this story? Read it aloud.

7. How long was the Prince able to withstand his temptation? What had he thought about (*a*) other people's sins and weaknesses, (*b*) his own goodness and strength of will? What would be his thoughts afterwards? Do you think his experience would be a good or bad thing for him? Why?

2. Written Composition

1. Notice:

(*a*) *Colour-words.*

"The yellow stamens each formed a little golden harp."

(*b*) *Other descriptive words.*

"A firm bridge of marble . . . delicately and skilfully carved." "Wings stretched out and motionless."

(*c*) *Expressive verbs.*

"Whirled away like shavings"; "jutted out"; "oozed out."

(*d*) *Similes.*

"Walruses were rolling about like monster maggots with pigs' heads." "The blocks of stone . . . grew dimmer and at last became as transparent as a white

cloud in the moonshine." "They shone like poppies at the harvest-time."

(*e*) *Metaphors.*

"I blew up, and made my ships the mountain-ice-bergs nip their boats."

(*f*) *Personifications.*

"Time had burned a picture into each pane." "The flowers and leaves there sang all the beautiful old songs of his childhood."

Find and write down other examples of above, and passages which show the *translator's* use of *alliteration* and *rhythm.*

2. Write short passages about (*a*) The Tree of Knowledge (Genesis iii.); (*b*) Jacob's Dream (Genesis xxviii.); (*c*) The Blessed (Revelation vii.).

3. Imagine you are one of the Winds, and write out your adventures. Tell how you are dressed, and let your narrative show your character.

4. Use the following personifying phrases in sentences: The frowning clouds; the wind's icy breath; dancing daffodils; the old Earth laughed; snowdrops, in prayer; the ripening orchard, in merriment; murderous rocks.

5. If you were a painter or sculptor, how would you show the following as persons?—The Ocean; Thunder; Anger; Liberty; Sleep; England.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find the meanings of: Shimmering, expiate, lissom, primeval, despondently.

2. Obtain information from encyclopædia or other

source about the monks' work in "Illumination" or decoration of old-time books.

3. On a map of the world find the positions of the Himalayas, Arctic Ocean, Kaffirland, China, Behring Island, Russia, New Holland, the Alps; of the countries of the deserts, the forest wildernesses; of the Kossack, the Pyramids and the Aurora Borealis. Tabulate these to show which of the Winds would see them, and find out the cause of the last-mentioned.

4. Read aloud:

"Ode to the West Wind," Shelley (iv. 65).
"The Wind in a Frolic," Howitt (ii. 19).
"The Happy Islands," Halmyr (i. 121).
"Eldorado," Poe (iii. 122).
"Joy, Shipmate, Joy," Henley (iv. 122).

A PICTURE FROM THE RAMPARTS

1. Oral Composition

1. Why is autumn a suitable "time" for such a story? What season would you choose for a glad tale? Why? (Give your *own* opinion.)

2. Relate the story as if told by (*a*) the bird, (*b*) the prisoner.

3. What thoughts would the presence of the bird suggest to the captive, and how were they related to the sunshine and the violets?

4. Why should he look bitterly at the sunbeam and yet be moved by the presence of the bird?

5. Study the construction of the following passages, and see how the author leads up to a climax:

(*a*) "We see dark and gloomy buildings . . . inside these it is darker still, yet not so gloomy as it is beyond yon iron grating."

(*b*) "Now is heard the music of a huntsman's horn, clear and lively; the bird flies away from the grating, the sunbeam disappears, and all is dark in the narrow cell, dark in the heart of the bad man."

Now notice the concluding passage. What effect has it on our minds after reading the one quoted in (*b*)? Read the passages aloud.

2. Written Composition

1. Write a portion of this story in the past tense instead of the present. Do you think it gives as vivid an impression?

2. Make a word-picture (in the present tense) of (*a*) a ruin, or (*b*) a forest by moonlight.

3. Write a short essay on "The sun shines upon good and evil alike."

4. Make up a story about an emigrant hearing a child sing a song about the homeland.

3. Reading and Research

1. Draw a sketch-map of Denmark and Scandinavia, and mark the position of the Sound mentioned in this story.

2. Obtain information about the following: Citadel, ramparts, palisades.

3. Read aloud:

"There was a child went forth," Whitman (iv. 57).
"The Lark's Grave," Westwood (ii. 16).
"Reverie of Poor Susan," Wordsworth (iii. 98).

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

1. Oral Composition

1. Which character in this story can we really admire? Why not (*a*) the emperor, (*b*) his ministers and officials, (*c*) his subjects, (*d*) the rogues? Which amused you most?

2. What made these people so foolish as to pretend they saw the material, and be afraid of sticking to their own opinions? Can you have a true opinion which differs from that held by the other scholars? Or from that held by your teacher? Could *your* opinion be wrong and that of the others right? Give examples.

3. What words could you use in place of: Officials, swindlers, approval, excessively, peculiar, distinguish, reflected, writhed?

4. Relate the story as if it were told by (*a*) the emperor, (*b*) one of the rogues to his wife, (*c*) the child who spoke the truth.

5. How was it that a child was the first to tell of the

truth? What effect did the truth have? Why did it not put an end to the make-belief?

6. What "idea" do you think the author was trying to make ridiculous, or satirising? In which of the other stories has he satirised the same idea? What do *you* think about it?

2. Written Composition

1. Write down the outline of this tale as briefly as possible.

2. Put into words the thoughts of the emperor when he arrived home after the procession.

3. "The material was light as a spider's web." Use in sentences with suitable comparisons: As dark as; as heavy as; as brilliant as; as transparent as; as frail as; as ethereal as; as delicate as.

4. Write a short story about a boy who held his own opinion and eventually was found to be right (or wrong).

5. Embody the following phrases in sentences of your own: Peculiar quality; unusually fine; impossibly dull; he reflected that; highest approval; on the occasion of.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find the meanings of: Excessively, council, counsel, official, originality, imaginary, canopy, gorgeous.

2. Read aloud:

"The Blind Men and the Elephant," Saxe (ii. 27).

THE STORY OF A MOTHER

1. Oral Composition

1. What payment was asked of the woman by (*a*) Night, (*b*) the blackthorn bush, (*c*) the lake, (*d*) the crone? What was there so beautiful about the lullabies, her heart, her hair and eyes? Why did she make these sacrifices?

2. How have you found Death pictured in words or drawings, (*a*) as a frightful figure, (*b*) as something beautiful? Give descriptions. How is he represented in this story? Tell me of men who have not been afraid of him. Have they all been good men? Do you know of any women who have faced Death bravely?

3. If you were a painter or sculptor, how would you picture Day, Joy, Spring, Winter, Strength, Charity, Hunger? Imagine them as persons.

4. Explain:

"Many flowers and trees have withered in the night; Death will soon come and transplant them."

"How didst thou find thy way hither?" asked he. "How couldst thou get here before me?" "I am a mother," she said.

"I only do His will," said Death. "I am His gardener."

2. Written Composition

Notice the beautiful simplicity of the words chosen *by the translator* when he changed Danish words and

expressions into English ones. Much depends upon the "taste" of the translator: good work is often spoiled when it is changed from one language to another.

See how effectively the following passage emphasises the one it follows in the book:

> "The old clock in the corner whirred and whirred, and the big lead weight ran right down to the ground with a bang, and then the clock stopped too."

Study also the description of Death's wonderful garden. Think of the characteristics of the flowers and trees mentioned, and then tell the kind of men and women they represent: (*a*) Delicate hyacinths, (*b*) strong peonies, (*c*) oak trees, (*d*) sweet-scented thyme, (*e*) big trees in small pots, (*f*) little tiresome flowers in rich earth, covered and tended.

2. Write contrasting passages about the two lives the woman saw pictured in the well.

3. "It was happiness to see how one of them became a blessing to the world. . . . The life of the other was all sorrow and need, sin and misery. . . . 'Both lives are according to the will of God,' said Death." Write down your opinion as to the truth of Death's statement.

4. Write the story briefly as if told by the mother.

5. Think how Night was represented. Picture her in your mind as (*a*) a Fairy who sets the good dreams free, lights the moon and stars, etc., (*b*) a Queen in a cloud-palace with her subjects, (*c*) a Mother soothing her tired children; and expand these ideas into short passages.

3. Reading and Research

1. If possible, visit an Art Gallery and study some of the pictures representing "ideas" by G. F. Watts. See

how he pictures Money, Life, Death, Hope, Time, Love, etc. Or try to obtain a book with prints of his drawings from a public library. Make notes.

2. Find meanings of: Anxious, miracle, tended, numbly, submission.

3. Read aloud:

"The Seasons," Spenser (iii. 103).
"My Lady Night," H. Halmyr (i. 109).

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER

1. Oral Composition

1. Relate the adventures of our hero as if told by (*a*) himself, (*b*) the boy who owned him, (*c*) the goblin.

2. "A shudder ran through the Tin Soldier, but he remained undaunted . . . fit to strike terror to the bravest heart." Can one be afraid and yet be no coward? Give an example.

3. Read aloud short passages which you consider in any way humorous.

4. Why was it appropriate for the nut-crackers to turn somersaults, the pencil to scribble, and the canary to make remarks in verse?

5. Describe the appearance of (*a*) the soldier in the box, (*b*) the soldier after his adventures, (*c*) the goblin, (*d*) the little dancer.

2. Written Composition

1. Study the passages: (*a*) "The Tin Soldier stood there . . . in the most horrible heat: but whether it was the heat of the fire, or the warmth of his feelings, he did not know." (*b*) "He had lost all his gay colour: it might have been from his perilous journey, or it might have been from grief, who can tell?"

Find other examples where alternative reasons are given, one literally true and one in jest. Write down similar alternative reasons for (*a*) an apple falling from a tree, (*b*) a child going to sleep, (*c*) the clock stopping, (*d*) leaves falling in autumn.

2. "The Playtime of the Toys." Write an account of this, making your characters talk and act appropriately.

3. Use the following phrases in sentences of your own: The offspring of; differed from; the lightest gauze; a terrific descent; to turn somersaults; swirled round; like a sylph.

4. Complete the following with suitable comparisons: (*a*) The soldier fell like . . . (*b*) Daylight gleamed in the distance; it seemed like . . . (*c*) The paper boat danced up and down as if . . . (*d*) He heard a roaring sound as though . . . (*e*) It was as dark inside the fish as . . .

5. Write down the strange adventures of one of your little brother s (or sister's) toys.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find from your dictionary the meanings of: Exception, feigned, absolutely, swirled, limper, spangle.

2. Read aloud:

"The Dumb Soldier," R. L. Stevenson (ii. 10).

THE BELL

1. Oral Composition

1. Read aloud the passages you think most beautiful.

2. Why were the people better able to hear the Bell outside the town?

3. Tell me briefly about each of the following who heard the Bell and:

(*a*) Stayed in the town. What did they hear of the Bell?

(*b*) Went to the edge of the wood. What kind of a bell did they find?

(*c*) Searched because of a reward. What did they learn?

(*d*) Felt anxious to find it. For what reasons did many give up the search?

(*e*) Sought diligently, but gave up just too soon. What did they find?

(*f*) Persevered to the end.

4. Contrast the Prince and the poor boy from the points of view of (*a*) their worldly position, (*b*) their education, (*c*) their choice of different paths.

5. Tell me some curious mistakes made about the Bell. Which mistakes seem the least and most excus-

able? Have you any idea what Hans Andersen meant by the Bell?

6. What quests were undertaken by (*a*) the knights of King Arthur, (*b*) Pilgrim when he left the City of Destruction, (*c*) Mytyl and Tyltyl, (*d*) Jason, (*e*) Richard Lion-Heart, (*f*) The Wise Men of the East?

2. Written Composition

1. Notice the use of repetition of sound by means of certain letters (alliteration), with which *the translator* has made his part of the work more pleasant to read:

*S*lippery *s*tones; *g*limpses of *g*olden clouds; the *r*ound *r*ed sun; pa*l*e b*l*ue tu*l*ips; me*l*ted in g*l*owing co*l*ours. Find other examples, and construct alliterative phrases about daffodils, stars, branches, meadows, rivers, mosses.

2. Study the similes: (*a*) "The sun stood still like a great shining altar" (simple comparison). (*b*) "Stars peeped out like countless diamond lamps" (simple comparison). (*c*) "All Nature was like a vast, holy temple, where trees and floating clouds were the pillars, flowers and grass the woven tapestry, and the heaven itself a great dome" (expanded comparison). Expand the similes in (*a*) and (*b*).

3. Write short accounts of the quest as told by (*a*) the Prince, (*b*) the poor boy.

4. Use the following phrases in sentences of your own: In glowing colours; a great stillness; long sprays clustered; deliciously peaceful.

5. Write similes for: Dust blowing in the road;

storm-clouds; white fleecy clouds; glowing embers; a lane in autumn; butterflies hovering over flowers; children dancing; frost on the window; snowflakes falling.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find meanings of: Romantic, perpetually, fragrant, transformed, responsible, fissures.

2. Obtain information about the following and their quests: Joan of Arc; Abraham Lincoln; Captain Scott; Father Damien; Perseus; John Howard; Alexander the Great; the Buddha.

3. Read aloud:

"Sir Galahad," Tennyson.

"Saint Philip Neri," Byron (iii. 110).

THE MONEY-PIG

1. Oral Composition

1. Relate the story.

2. What was the opinion regarding the money-pig held by (*a*) himself, (*b*) the other characters?

3. Notice what the old doll said to the other toys: "Let us have a game at being men and women." How does the author make his characters like human beings? Name the kind of men and women he means by (*a*) the

waggon, (*b*) the cushions, pretty but stupid, (*c*) the bamboo cane, (*d*) the cracker, (*e*) the money-pig.

4. Why had the money-pig's slit been made larger than originally intended? What did he mean to do for one of the players? What might he have done?

5. Why was the money glad when it escaped from him? Suggest what happened to it.

2. Written Composition

1. Write a story about the money-pig refusing to be a collecting-box any longer, and show how he became much happier (or unhappier).

2. Consider the words used by the waggon: "Each has its own value; we cannot all be noblemen; there must be some to do the work." Write down what you think about this statement.

3. Suggest suitable sentences to be used by (*a*) a church bell, (*b*) a dinner-gong, (*c*) an easy chair, (*d*) the handsome, cracked doll.

4. "The clock talked politics—tick tick!" Use in sentences the following words imitating actual sounds: Clink clank! Boom! Crash! Ding dong! and others which suggest themselves to you.

5. Write an essay on "If I were Rich," explaining what you would do with your money.

3. Reading and Research

1. Note down the meanings of: Intention, engraving, verbal, discussion, ferrule, intellectual.

2. Read aloud:

"The Heritage," Lowell (iii. 7).
"Mahmood," Lowell (iii. 15).
"Village Blacksmith," Longfellow (ii. 53).

THE NIGHTINGALE

1. Oral Composition

1. What is there amusing about the author's description of (*a*) the flowers in the palace garden, (*b*) the emperor's palace, (*c*) the emperor's knowledge of the nightingale, (*d*) the nightingale's knowledge of the emperor, (*e*) the rank of the gentleman in waiting? Mention other humorous passages.

2. Relate (*a*) how the kitchen maid became cook, (*b*) how the procession set out from the palace to find the nightingale, (*c*) how the artificial bird only satisfied for a time, (*d*) how the real one made a bargain with the emperor.

3. Explain what was meant by:

"Even the lackeys and chambermaids announced that they were satisfied, and that is saying a great deal."

"Even an emperor's heart is on the left side."

"He said it was just as good as ever, and his saying it made it so."

4. Do you think the nightingale appreciated its life at court? Did it sing better or worse for its splendid imprisonment? Why?

5. How was the artificial bird better than the real one according to the music-master, and why was his treatise such a great success? What reasons have you for thinking his opinion wrong?

6. Account for the behaviour of the following when the emperor lay dying: (*a*) The lackeys, (*b*) the nation, (*c*) the artificial nightingale, (*d*) the real one.

2. Written Composition

1. Write an essay on "The Music of Nature."

2. Write an account of how Death visited the emperor and how he departed from him.

3. Construct beautiful sentences making appropriate use of these adjectives: Brilliant, crystal, shadowy, weird, silvery, monstrous, vague, slender, silken, gorgeous, fascinating.

4. Make an outline of this story, showing how it is constructed.

5. Put into words one of the songs the emperor heard the nightingale sing.

6. Write sentences containing similes for: Sparrows chattering; larks trilling; a dog whining; a frog croaking; a lion roaring; bees humming.

3. Reading and Research

1. Make notes and sketches from any source about China and its people, studying particularly their work and amusements.

2. Find out the meanings of: Perpetually, permanent, recompensed, coquetting, insisted, imperial, sanctity.

3. Read aloud:

"Dartside," Kingsley (iii. 50).
"The Everlasting Music," Reed Moorhouse (iv. 68).
"The Singing Leaves," Lowell (iv. 85).

OLÉ LUKÖIÉ, THE DUSTMAN

1. Oral Composition

1. Which adventure do you consider (*a*) the most amusing, (*b*) the most interesting, (*c*) the strangest?

2. Relate any one of the stories you choose.

3. Name the speaker and explain the following:

"The whole passage has been smeared over with bacon fat. Nothing could be nicer."

"He's not many-sided; it's good enough to amuse us."

"'We will gladly pay you, Olé,' . . . but I don't do it for money."

"Anyone who doesn't think our country the best must be a fool."

"You may have too much of a good thing."

4. What was the objection made by the portrait of Hialmar's great-grandfather to the stories of Olé Luköié? Do you agree with the old man? Suggest some stories he would have liked.

5. "The ducks waddled." Give sentences containing the right verbs to describe the movements of (*a*) turkeys, (*b*) horses, (*c*) donkeys, (*d*) lizards, (*e*) frogs, (*f*) sparrows, (*g*) thrushes, (*h*) starlings.

6. Tell me briefly what you can about Africa, storks, ostriches, pyramids.

7. Read the sentences you think humorous and those in which you think the author is making fun of an idea (satirising); *e.g.*, "He had been in very grand company, but in order to get there he had been obliged to shrink wonderfully." What did the writer mean? Have you ever had to shrink?

2. Written Composition

1. Make a list of seven other adventures which might have happened to Hialmar, and write one out in the same style as the text.

2. Write a humorous letter from abroad, describing the inconveniences of travelling.

3. "The clouds scudded across the sky." What picture does this suggest to your mind? What verb would answer the same purpose as "scudded"? What verb would alter the picture? Supply three verbs with each of these nouns: The wind . . . ; the waves . . . ; the voices . . . ; the music . . .

5. Write a word-picture of (*a*) Olé Lukŏié, or (*b*) the old great-grandfather.

6. Find your notes on any subject you choose, and write a connected essay.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find out the meanings of: Antiquity, embroidered, energetically, bridal, depressed.

2. Find out from some standard book on Mythology (such as Bulfinch's *Age of Fable*) information about the gods of Greece and Rome; especially about the deities of the Sun, Moon, Sea, Winds and Dawn.

3. Consult your encyclopædia about the stars and their constellations. Make notes and diagrams for use in a future essay.

4. Read aloud:

"Grandfather Misery," Halmyr (iv. 96).
"Aladdin," Lowell (iii. 84).
"Escape at Bedtime," R. L. Stevenson (ii. 40).
"Tommy's Dream," from *The Golden World* (i. 92).
"Wynken, Blynken, and Nod," Eugene Field (i. 66).

THE ELF-HILL

1. Oral Composition

1. Relate some of the pranks played by the sons of the old Trold.

2. Read these nonsense-passages, and find others:

"Is that a hill? We should call it a hole in Norway."

"At this moment two will-o'-the-wisps came hopping along, one faster than the other, so of course one arrived before the other."

"I might as well be having toothache for all the sleep I get."

3. Why should any man write "nonsense"? Who wrote *Alice in Wonderland*, *Bad Child's Book of Beasts*, *Book of Nonsense*, *Jackdaw of Rheims*, *Faithless Nelly Gray*, *Yarn of the Nancy Brig*?

4. Say what you can of the following: Elves, goblins, trolds, nixies, will-o'-the-wisps. Tell me of any other strange inhabitants you meet in the Land of Fairy Tales.

2. Written Composition

1. Write an account of how the Elf-king's daughters showed off their various accomplishments.

2. Remember the importance of correct punctuation, and re-write the following passage, using the right stops:

there is the cock crowing said the old housekeeper now we must shut the shutters so that the sun may not burn us up then the hill closed up but the lizards went on running up and down the clefts of the tree and they said to each other ah how much i liked the old trold i liked the boys better said the earthworm but then it couldnt see poor miserable creature that it was

3. Write a story about your discovery of "Nonsense Island" and your strange adventures thereon.

4. Make sentences containing these similes completed with names of animals: As cunning as; as wise as; as fierce as; as cowardly as; as quiet as; as timid as; as

bold as; as hypocritical as; as stupid as; as obstinate as; as blind as; as deaf as.

5. Use these adjectives in sentences of your own: Distinguished, ill-mannered, tingling, sparkling, startled, transparent, nimble.

3. Reading and Research

1. Mark on your sketch-map of Scandinavia and Denmark the positions of the Dovrefield, Odense, Copenhagen.

2. Use your dictionary to find meanings of: Eavesdropper, kickshaws, fastnesses, veteran, economically, exterminated, accomplishment. Enter in note-book.

3. Read up from some book of travel or geographical reader descriptions of Norwegian scenery, and the work and pleasures of the people living there. Make notes and sketches for use in writing a future letter to a friend about an imaginary holiday.

4. Read aloud:

"The Fairies," Allingham (ii. 75).
"Fairy Song," Shakespeare (ii. 108).
"Little Billee," Thackeray (iii. 61).
"Mrs. Mary Blaize," Goldsmith (iv. 76).
"A Dogless Blind Man," Hood (iv. 69).
"Fairy Land," Reed Moorhouse (i. 27).
"Fairy Revels," Halmyr (i. 39).

THE WILD SWANS

1. Oral Composition

1. What instances can you give to show the character of Elise with regard to her (*a*) patience, (*b*) piety, (*c*) steadfastness of purpose, (*d*) courage?

2. Read aloud the passages you consider the most beautiful.

3. Say what opinion you have about (*a*) the father, (*b*) the archbishop, (*c*) the husband.

4. Relate the parts of the story dealing with (*a*) the cruelty of the stepmother, (*b*) Elise's flight with the swans, (*c*) her work on the garments of nettles, (*d*) from her condemnation to the end.

5. Mention other fairy-tales you know, in which one of the characters is a wicked stepmother.

6. When could we liken the sound of the sea to (*a*) a hymn, (*b*) a prayer, (*c*) the roaring of wild beasts, (*d*) the voice of one in pain who cannot rest, (*e*) a dirge, (*f*) the laughter of children?

2. Written Composition

1. Write a short story about a good stepmother.

2. Study the alliteration used *by the translator* in the following phrases: *S*unbeams *c*ast a golden *s*himmer; b*r*anches of lofty fo*r*est t*r*ees; so p*l*ain*l*y was every *l*eaf

reflected. Write down other examples from the text, and others of your own construction.

3. Read aloud the description of the wood. Notice the number of pictures brought before our minds: Trees, sunbeams, grass and herbs, birds, springs, bushes, pond, stags, crab-apples. Make a list of what you would see and hear while on a country ramble, or at a railway station, or on a tram-ride, or in school. Use a word with each object or sound to describe its shape, colour, size, intensity, or other effect on your mind through your senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste or smell.

4. In which other story did you notice the great use made of (*a*) colour and other descriptive words, (*b*) beautiful comparisons?

Find and write out examples of each after studying the following similes: "The water rose and fell softly like the bosom of a sleeping child." "The ship looked like a gull floating on the water." "Shadows looking like giants."

5. "When the wind whistled it whispered to the roses." Complete the following sentences, using words which usually describe the actions and feelings of human beings (personification):

It was Autumn, and the skies . . . for the fallen leaves.

The sea was . . . for its prey.

The sunbeams . . . the . . . roses.

The waves . . . over the doomed vessel.

The wind . . . through the forest trees.

In the meadow the breezes . . . to the grasses.

Dawn came, and the storm . . . away.

6. Write two short contrasting passages about a rich and a poor child.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find from your dictionary the meanings of: Guise, savoury, solitary, colonnade, infatuated, ghoul, gestures.

2. From encyclopædia or other source obtain information about the illusions known as Fata Morgana and other mirages.

3. Read aloud:

"The Beggar Maid," Tennyson (ii. 18).
"Song of the Heavens," Addison (iv. 58).
"Great, Wide, Beautiful, Wonderful World," Rands (ii. 58).
"Day," R. Browning (iii. 77).

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-BUSH

1. Oral Composition

1. What fault did the snail find with his companions? What did he wish them to do? Was he worthy of the respect shown him by the rose? The cow had perhaps a different idea of him. Suggest it.

2. Two of you take the characters of Snail and Rose-bush, and act this story.

3. Notice the repetition of words and phrases in this story, and how they bring rhythm into the narrative:

"Always spring out, spring out into roses."
"Flowers always fresh, always new."
"The sun was so warm; the air so refreshing."

Read them aloud. Listen always for passages (where repetition may not occur) in which *the translator* has chosen words which seem to read flowingly and musically; *i.e.*, with rhythm.

4. What was the snail's opinion of the world, and how did he treat it? Why was this foolish? Do you feel sorry for him, or vexed? Why? What could he have done?

5. Are there any people like the rose-bush? In what respect are they like her?

6. When both lives were ended, from which had the world gained? How had it gained? Suppose we were all like the snail, what then?

7. Who said the following, and what was meant?

"I blossomed in gladness, for I could not do otherwise."

"I am going into myself. I shall remain there. The world is nothing to me."

2. Written Composition

1. Notice how the beauty of this story is enhanced by the simplicity of the English words used in the translation. See also how the author increases the interest of his stories by means of conversations, and how quick the "action" of this parable is.

Study this passage:

"The summer passed; the autumn passed; the rose-bush had yielded roses and buds up to the time that the snow fell. The weather became wet and tempestuous, the rose-bush bowed down towards the ground, the snail crept into the earth.

"A new year commenced, the rose-bush revived, the snail came forth again."

Write short passages in the same style, suggesting the passing (*a*) from day to night, (*b*) from calm to storm.

2. Write a short story about a woman who was like the rose-bush.

3. Express what was said in the following examples without using the actual spoken words:

"I expect an immense deal from you," said the rose-bush. "May I ask when it is to come forth?"

"You are now only an old stick of a rose-bush," said he, "you must expect to wither away soon."

4. Write a composition on "A Rose looking in at the Window," stating what it said to you. Or, turn up your notes and sketches and write them up as a connected essay on "Snails and other Garden-folk."

5. Use the following sound-words in sentences of your own: Babbling, bubbling, rumbling, crashing, whistling, rushing, wheezy, sighing, tinkling, moaning, splashing, murmuring, whispering.

6. Construct sentences in which you apply the following adjectives to inanimate things: Cruel, smiling, strong, deceitful, harsh, angry, thirsty. (Personification.)

3. Reading and Research

1. Find the meanings of: Tempestuous, experienced, meditative, endowed, contribute, remembrances.

2. Read aloud:

"The Village Preacher," Goldsmith.

"Flower Chorus," Emerson (ii. 45).

"Moss Roses," Reed Moorhouse (ii. 90).
"The Tree," Björnson (ii. 36).
"Flower in the crannied wall," Tennyson (iii. 121).

THE TINDER BOX

1. Oral Composition

1. How does this story differ from others of Hans Andersen? Contrast it with *The Little Mermaid*, *The Elf-Hill* and *The Money-Pig*. In what respects do these differ from one another?

2. Picture in your mind and describe (*a*) the soldier, (*b*) the witch, (*c*) the princess, (*d*) the scene on the scaffold, (*e*) the dogs at the wedding-breakfast.

3. When did the soldier's friends consider him a thorough gentleman? In what way was their conduct peculiar?

4. Relate the story as it would be told by (*a*) the biggest of the dogs, (*b*) the shoemaker's boy, (*c*) the princess; telling only the parts they *knew*.

5. When you read of the stratagem employed by the lady-in-waiting, did it remind you of a similar one related in *The Arabian Nights*? What was it?

2. Written Composition

1. Notice the opening of the story: "A soldier came marching along the road. One, two! One, two!" Write

similar introductions to stories about (*a*) a clock, (*b*) a sailor, (*c*) a knife-grinder, (*d*) the postman at the door.

2. Write down what in your opinion makes a gentleman; or write a composition about what you would wish for if you were the fortunate (or unfortunate) owner of the tinder box.

3. Punctuate the following passages:

(*a*) no my dear husband it is there said the queen who saw another door with a cross on it

(*b*) by heaven said the soldier this is a nice kind of tinder box if i can get whatever i want like this get me some money he said

(*c*) there he was standing on the high road again with his pockets boots knapsack and cap full of gold

4. Consider what the soldier would think when he found himself neglected in the attic. Put his thoughts down in writing.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find the meanings of: Prophesied, intensely, fathom, gratification.

2. Read up about ancient methods of obtaining light and fire. Make notes and sketches.

3. Read aloud:

"Nature's Gentleman," Linton (iv. 60).
"False Friends-like," Barnes (iii. 89).
"The Last of the Witches," L. Elise (i. 119).

THE BUTTERFLY

1. Oral Composition

1. What flowers has the author suitably described as (*a*) charming little things, somewhat too juvenile, (*b*) too bashful, (*c*) too enthusiastic, (*d*) too fond of show, (*e*) complexion too yellow?

2. Relate how the butterfly went out to woo, and what happened to him.

3. Give your opinion of the butterfly's character.

4. Mention any flowers that bloom in (*a*) spring, (*b*) summer, (*c*) autumn, (*d*) winter.

5. Tell me any other story you have heard about flowers.

Which flowers could we liken to (*a*) a noble lady, (*b*) a king, (*c*) a nun, (*d*) an ordinary person, (*e*) a conceited youth, (*f*) a soldier?

2. Written Composition

1. Considering the Rose as queen of the flowers, write a short passage in which the other flower-inhabitants of a garden are aptly compared.

2. Write a short story suggested to you by the proverb, "He who hesitates is lost."

3. Write down in your own words what was meant by:

"That class of notable girls who can always look well, and yet make themselves useful in the kitchen."

"One can hardly believe a plant in a flower-pot, they are too much among human beings."

4. Use the following phrases in sentences of your own: Without further ado; wished to select; not to his taste; a great attraction to.

5. Explain what the butterfly was thinking of when he said: "To live is not enough; sunshine, freedom, and a little flower one must have."

6. Make apt comparisons for: Hills seen through the mist; sand blowing in the desert; boys working at school; thunder; lightning; a ship with white sails.

3. Reading and Research

1. From a Nature book obtain information about butterflies: Stages of growth; how they feed; length of life, etc. Make notes, and learn the names and colours of the British kinds.

2. Find the meanings of: Discreetly, encountering, predict, domestic.

3. Read aloud:

"Chrysanthemum," from *The Golden World* (ii. 35).
"Butterflies' Suits," Halmyr (ii. 17).
"Sing Hey," L. Elise (i. 107).

THE RACERS

1. Oral Composition

1. State the opinion of (*a*) the hare about the snail, (*b*) the snail about the hare.

2. Describe the method of judging used by the old boundary post; also how the artistic mule arrived at his decision in favour of the hare.

3. Think of the claim put forward by the swallow, and why it had never even been considered. Were the judges right or wrong?

4. Relate what the fly thought about the prize-winner, and give his idea of his own importance.

5. Of all the characters mentioned, which do you consider (*a*) the most foolish, (*b*) the wisest?

2. Written Composition

1. Write a composition suggested to you by the words of the rose about the sunbeam.

2. Make up a speech delivered by the mule on the occasion of the prize presentation.

3. Write a few sentences about each of the following: Hares, swallows, mules, flies, moorhens, earthworms.

4. State, as briefly as is possible, the opinions of each of those discussing the race.

5. Find your notes on any subject you choose, and write a connected essay.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find the meanings of: Fickle, contempt, affirm, sagacity, immeasurable, committee.

2. Read aloud:

"Summer Sun," R. L. Stevenson (ii. 32).
"The Sun," Psalm xix. (iii. 76).

THE UGLY DUCKLING

1. Oral Composition

1. When did you first find out that the "duckling" wasn't a duckling at all? What was it made you guess he was a swan?

2. Recount the various misfortunes that happened to him. Which do you consider the worst?

3. The old duck laughed at her young ones' idea of the size of the world. How big did *she* think it was? What is *your* idea of its size? How many worlds are there?

4. "Two broods were fighting for the head of an eel, and the cat captured it. 'That's how things go in this

world,' said the mother duck." What did she mean? Can you remember and relate one of Æsop's fables which expresses the same truth?

5. The duck considered the ugliness did not matter, as her young one was a drake. Do you agree with her? Can you tell me of a nation of long ago which thought men also ought to be beautiful, and tried to make them so? Do we try to make them so? Why not?

6. "He is so ungainly and queer, he must be whacked." Who said this? Was it a right thing to "whack" for such a reason? Can one be "ungainly and queer" in mind as well as in body? Ought we to "whack" in that case?

7. The children screamed with laughter when the "duckling" flew into the milk-pail, butter-cask and meal-tub. Why didn't the duckling laugh? Have you ever laughed at yourself when you have been in difficulties? Why not?

8. "He opened his great chasm of a mouth." Notice that the comparison used here is without the words "like" or "as," but as if comparison and thing compared were identical (metaphor).

Study:

He opened his mouth as if it were a chasm (simile).
He opened his great chasm of a mouth (metaphor).
Stars are like flowers in the fields of night (simile).
Stars are flowers in the fields of night (metaphor).

Change some of the similes you have made into metaphors.

2. Written Composition

1. Write the outline, or framework, of the story.

2. Relate a further conversation between the hen and the dog after the "duckling" had gone, writing it down as a scene from a play.

3. "Bang! bang! went the guns, and whole flocks of geese flew up." Construct sentences, using the following words which imitate sounds: Creak! tick-tock! rat-a-tat! rub-a-dub! swish!

4. Also make sentences containing words imitating sounds made by animals; *e.g.*: Turkey, goose, owl, sheep, pig, sparrow, lapwing.

5. Remembering the story, write about a boy or girl who was considered an "Ugly Duckling" and who proved to be a "Swan."

6. In the style of the text give your description of a menagerie. Let the animals do all the talking and thinking; consider yourself merely the reporter of their conversation and thoughts. Or, think how a duck would give a first lesson in swimming to its young ones, and write what it would say.

7. "He felt glad of all the tribulation and misery he had gone through; he was the better able to appreciate his good fortune." Briefly express your opinion about this statement.

3. Reading and Research

1. Find the meanings of: Secluded, privation, indented, hovel, exultation.

2. Consult your atlas and geography-book, and make notes of any point of interest about the journey a stork would make during its migration from Denmark to Egypt.

3. Read aloud:

"The Christmas Turkey," L. Elise (i. 100).

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Now that you have read some of Hans Andersen's stories, I wonder what is your impression of him as a man.

Of course you cannot know from his tales what he looked like, or whether he was rich or poor, died young or lived to be old. Nor will you able to do more than guess at the outward circumstances of his life, though from his evident familiarity with the country and the sea, you can have certain ideas as to how portions of his life were spent. But it is quite possible for you to form an opinion of his character from his writings; to know what manner of things he liked or disliked, the kind of people who pleased or annoyed him, and the ideas with which he agreed or did not agree. Briefly, you can tell how he regarded the World and the things he found therein, and this is of great importance.

You will have noticed how fond Andersen was of colour and brightness. The love of these is worth having, worth cultivating. You must have such love if you wish to find the way to Fairyland. For only then will you waken with delight to see the sun " poke his golden fingers " through the blinds, and feel joy when you look at the dew-pearls on the grass. Having such love it will give you the

greatest pleasure to gaze at even the commonest flowers clad in their coats of many colours. When you journey to school you will be glad to notice the changing browns of roadside and ploughed field, the myriad greys of shadows moving in the trees and under the eaves of the houses, the falling autumn leaves, "yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red," and the vague blue hills like smoke in the distance. And when the artist Day, weary, puts aside her brush, and Night seizes it with eager hand to paint everything afresh, you will love to watch the brilliant hues give place to quiet ones; till, in the dusk, the yellow flowers and white gleam like stars set in the firmament of earth, while silver flowers grow in the fields of heaven, and you have the glory of the moon. Each season, too, will bring its own adornments; fresh shades, new tints: the year will fling out to you its treasure of colour with lavish hand.

Hans Andersen made that treasure his own, and in other ways he, a wise miser, hoarded the wealth of beauty life offers us. For he loved the songs of stream and ocean and falling waters of a fountain; the shapes of trees and mountains, and those formed by the flights of birds; the texture and perfume of flowers. These became part of his life, so that he could not think or write without their beautiful imagery suggesting itself; so that his stories, like the blooms of his rose-bush, add to life's loveliness and fragrance.

He saw, and made it easier for us to see, the beauty everywhere around us. He heard the music that is always sounding, and bade us listen. And he also found, and helped us to discover, the delight that lies in love and laughter, even for people with faults; so that we, with him, can turn such into Darning-needles or Money-pigs, so absurdly fine or with such extraordinary stomachs, that they amuse rather than annoy.

You will have found that our author's sympathy was with the poor and wretched. He claims our regard for them also. Think of the real hero of that lovely tale, *The Bell*, and the lowly position of the maid who alone knew all about the Nightingale. Remember where the Student lived whose torn poetry-book was full of magic, and at what cost he obtained the precious volume. The best stories are surely those in which, with wonderful tenderness, Hans Andersen writes of a sorrowing Mother, the dear little Mermaid, of gentle Elise, and an unfortunate Ugly Duckling.

Never did our author forget the hardships and poverty that were his lot for so many years. For he who became the Fairy King was once the poor boy with the ill-fitting, borrowed confirmation clothes, and that boy's quest was his own. He too had starved and studied in the garret of the Huckster; he too had once been a despised Duckling, cruelly pecked at by the other inhabitants of the world-farmyard.

Hans Christian Andersen was born on 2nd April,

1805, at Odense, one of the most ancient of the cities of Denmark, rich with legends. Here, in a lowly room, which served alike as kitchen, parlour, workshop and bedroom for the entire family, was born the boy destined to become world-famous. A poor home, but its humble walls were covered with pictures, flowers from the fields and lanes lent it adornment, pots of fragrant mint on the window-sill provided pungent sweetness, and a shelf of well-read books gave all the wonderful things books can give.

Playmates Hans never had, nor can one wonder at it. Apart from wandering alone in the woods, singing songs to himself and twining wreaths of posies, his greatest pleasure lay in dressing dolls in clothes of his own making, surely a most unusual occupation for a boy. Or he would sit in solitary state for hours at a time in a tent rigged up with a broomstick and his mother's apron, dreaming away, or playing with the quaint, wooden toys carved by his crazy grandfather, men with animals' heads and beasts with wings. In the evenings he was quite content to listen while his cobbler-father recited whole dramas, or amuse himself with his puppets which he made strut and perform on the stage of his tiny toy-theatre. Other boys, naturally enough, had little patience with such pastimes, and regarded Hans as something of a "milk-sop." Failing to understand his strange and sensitive nature, they either left him severely alone or openly jeered at him.

If ever he wished for company, and this was seldom, Hans sought it in the spinning-room at the poor-house. Here he was a great favourite with the old women, who found him an eager listener to their gruesome stories of witches, trolds and dreadful ghouls. It was here he heard the stories of *The Tinder Box* and *The Travelling Companion*, which he afterwards re-told in his own charming way.

No, he was not lonely, for it was now that he commenced to create a world for himself, and to live in a Land of Make-Belief, where Walking-sticks and Furniture chattered to him, and Wizards and sweet Princesses met him at every corner; where Nut-crackers turned somersaults to amuse him, and Canaries composed verses. And was not Olé Luköié always to be found there whenever this peculiar boy desired to travel?

When he was eleven years old, Hans lost his father, and he was left even more to himself, his dolls, and his strange fancies. Now it was that his first play was written—a terrible tragedy in which all the characters were killed, and which was a success only in the opinions of the youthful author and his doting mother. The idea of being a writer of plays remained with Andersen all his life.

It was because he showed such skill with his needle while dressing his puppets that it was decided that he should be apprenticed to tailoring, but the spoiled boy soon left his employment because he could not stand the rough jokes and horseplay of his work-

mates, and he returned to his life of apparent idleness till the visit of a travelling theatrical company filled his mind with the idea that he was born to be a great actor. Thus, three years after his father's death, and with less than two pounds in his pocket, Hans set out gleefully for Copenhagen to seek his fortune. "You go through a frightful lot of hardships first," he explained to his mother, "and then you become famous." But it was not her son's confidence that gained his parent's consent to the adventure so much as the words of an old "wise-woman" whom she consulted. After carefully reading the boy's fortune with cards and a coffee-cup the old crone prophesied that the lad would become great, and that his native town would one day be illuminated in his honour. It was one of the lucky guesses which come true, for many years afterwards the town of Odense gave such a welcome to the famous man they had once regarded as a half-crazed boy.

It was a queer, ungainly figure the people of Copenhagen saw when they first set eyes on our Hans Clodhopper. His face was comically ugly, his long, thin arms and legs were many sizes too large for his clothes, and, as if to compensate for this, his hat was too big for his head and slipped down over his ears. His boots, his first pair, were proudly worn outside his trousers instead of inside, for he wished everybody to notice them. No wonder that he was taken for a lunatic. And as far as schooling

went, he was almost without education; he could neither write grammatically nor spell correctly; his mind just held a jumble of stories, poems and plays.

Our fortune-seeker soon experienced his "frightful lot of hardships," for in a day or two he was quite destitute, the little money he had brought having vanished. The miseries he endured during his first few years at Copenhagen were enough to break the bravest spirit. But nothing could make him return home to Odense and acknowledge himself beaten. No extreme of poverty and starvation; no snub, rebuff or failure (and he failed at everything he tried: dancing, singing, acting, playwriting), could turn him from his purpose. Like his Tin Soldier he was unbending, and the "milk-sop" was proving himself a "man."

"Luck obeys the downright striker," says the poet Lowell, and the boy's doggedness found him noble-minded friends at last, who brought him to the notice of the King of Denmark. It was arranged that Hans should go to school for three years. He was now eighteen years of age, and it was no light task to make a fresh start in this way; but he worked with his usual determination at his studies, even though he shed many tears over his school-books, and soon his natural ability began to show itself.

It was through the efforts of these friends that Hans was afterwards enabled to travel, and the accounts of his wanderings in Germany, France and

Italy met with some success. Some of his poems and novels also became very popular.

Then at thirty years of age he published his first volume of *Fairy-tales as told to the Children.* There were only four stories, but fairy-tales have a trick of dragging others along with them, and more volumes soon followed. Though their worth was not recognised at once, even by their author, in a very few years the name of Hans Andersen was famous in many countries, his stories translated into many tongues. Fortune had smiled upon him in a way he had never expected; the Duckling was acclaimed a Swan.

The "Good old Poet," as he was affectionately called, died in 1875, seventy years old. His stories will never die, but will continue as long as there is a world to make into a happier and nobler place in which to live. For his fairy-tales, like the music of his Nightingale, are "To cheer you and to make you thoughtful too; to give you songs of the happy ones, and those that suffer too."

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